

News Release

Healthy Butternuts — The Search Continues

MANOTICK, November 27, 2007 — Butternut trees are disappearing throughout eastern North America due to a non-native fungus disease called butternut canker.

Butternut is listed as federally and provincially endangered but it is not protected on private land. Education and stewardship approaches are the key to protecting this species on private land in Ontario. There is a very high canker infection rate in eastern Ontario. We encourage landowners to maintain their healthy butternut trees.

Rideau Valley Conservation Authority (RVCA) is pleased to announce a generous contribution of funding from the Government of Canada Habitat Stewardship Program for Species at Risk to support the ongoing Regional Butternut Recovery Program in eastern Ontario. With landowner permission and assistance, we have visited hundreds of private and public sites and have over 380 healthy trees in our database as potential seed sources for future seed collection. Twenty-five of those trees show signs of resistance to the canker disease. Leaf samples have been sent to the Ontario Forest Research Institute for DNA testing to determine whether they are hybrids or pure butternut species.

Finding trees that exhibit signs of resistance to the canker is the main focus of our program. We are asking for help from landowners and interested persons to inform us of locations of apparently-healthy butternut trees so we can assess these trees for possible resistance. We're concerned that we will lose some of these trees to human activity or natural causes before we get a chance to collect seed or scions from them. The importance of locating these promising individuals cannot be overstated as these trees will be used to propagate seedlings to replace the many butternut trees that have been and continue to be lost to this very virulent disease.

If you have butternut trees on your property that you would allow us to assess for seed source potential and disease resistance or you know the location of healthy butternut trees, please contact the RVCA Landowner Resource Centre at 613 692 3571 ext 1128 or 1132 or contact Rose Fleguel at rose.fleguel@rideauvalley.on.ca .

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