



# Rebel Underground

**Sons of Confederate Veterans  
Major John C. Hutto Camp #443  
Jasper, Alabama**

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**Published Monthly**

**April 2025**

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**The Major John C. Hutto Camp's April Camp Meeting  
will be in Jasper, Alabama on  
Sunday 20 April 2025 at 2:00 pm**

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**The Program for April will be  
Confederate Flags for Confederate Soldiers**

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**The York Light Artillery Cannon Crew will muster in front of the  
Alabama Capitol on 26 April 2025 at 09:00AM**

**Everyone is invited to attend the  
Confederate Memorial Day Commemoration at the Capitol in Montgomery.  
Past CiC Paul Gramling Jr., guest speaker  
Come see and hear the Cannonade in Honor of our Confederate Soldiers, Sailors &  
Marines**

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**The SCV Dues Renewal for 2026 will be in the January, April and July  
issues of the Alabama Confederate, due by July 31, 2025.  
Please help us preserve and honor our Confederate Family & Heroes**

**The American Chestnut: An Icon of History**  
**Recipe included below!**  
**Adam Dasinger, March 3, 2025**



A gorgeous chestnut in autumn | courtesy of author

I have always found the tragic story of the American Chestnut (*Castanea dentata*) in the Appalachian Mountains of great interest and have followed its history since the early 1970s. This magnificent tree—second only to yellow poplar in size and height—was once native to the eastern United States, thriving primarily in and around the mountains from New England to Alabama. Every year, it produced an abundance of tasty nuts encased in sharp burs, which fell to the forest floor in early autumn.

Historically, chestnuts were gathered in the fall and sold to markets that supplied major cities across the East and South with this beloved holiday delicacy. The tradition was

even immortalized in song with the famous line, “Chestnuts on an open fire.” There are several ways to enjoy them—roasted, boiled, or even raw. Over time, a variety of recipes were developed that featured chestnuts as the main ingredient, including chestnut dressing, a cornbread and bacon-based dish enhanced with celery and onions to bring out the nuts’ natural sweetness. This dish was especially popular at Thanksgiving and Christmas.

The American Chestnut was not only an important resource for humans but also a vital part of the Appalachian ecosystem. However, it was nearly wiped out by a devastating fungus accidentally introduced in New York City at the turn of the 20th century. Within thirty years—by the end of the Great Depression—nearly all living had succumbed to the disease. Wildlife such as black bears, deer, and turkeys, which had relied heavily on the tree’s annual nut production, were forced to adapt to alternative food sources like acorns. The phrase “adapt or die” certainly applied to these animals during this period of ecological upheaval.

Although the fungus kills all parts of the tree above ground, the roots remain unaffected. As a result, new growth frequently sprouts from the roots, only to be killed again within a few years.

A careful observer can still spot these small trees scattered throughout the Appalachian forests, as they are not uncommon within their historical range. For example, I know of several pockets in the Talladega National Forest in northeast Alabama where these trees persist, and I have even seen a few that managed to produce nuts before eventually succumbing to the blight.



[Keep reading for the recipe!]

The beautiful chestnut |  
courtesy of author

For decades, scientists have worked tirelessly to save the American Chestnut using various methods, with some success. Occasionally, trees with natural resistance to the blight are discovered, and their nuts are collected for research. Additionally, the American Chestnut has been crossbred with the blight-resistant Chinese chestnut, a smaller species, to produce hybrids that retain nearly all the characteristics of the American Chestnuts while inheriting the

Chinese tree's resistance. One such hybrid, the Dunstan Chestnut, has become particularly common in commercial cultivation.

Today, many old farms and fields contain Chinese chestnuts or hybrids, which is what most people recognize when they see a chestnut tree. Hunters frequently plant these hybrids to attract deer and turkeys. Chestnut-derived products, such as honey and pasta, are available from commercial orchards in the western U.S. and Europe. Chestnut honey has an intense, distinctive flavor, while chestnut pasta is exceptionally delicious.

Additionally, reclaimed chestnut lumber—sourced from historic homes and barns—is highly sought after and commands premium prices. For those interested, raw chestnuts can also be purchased online from farms around the world.

To learn more, visit the American Chestnut Foundation website at [tacf.org](http://tacf.org). This dedicated organization has been working for decades to restore the iconic American Chestnut to its native range, ensuring that future generations may one day see this magnificent tree thriving once again in the Appalachian forests.

Preparing a yummy chestnut-inspired meal | courtesy of author

### Chestnut Dressing Recipe - Ingredients:

- 1 pound of chopped peeled, cooked or roasted fresh chestnuts,
- 6-8 slices of cooked hickory smoked bacon
- 2 Boxes of Jiffy Cornbread mix
- 1 cup of onion finely chopped
- 3/4 cup of celery finely chopped
- 1/4 cup of green onions finely chopped
- 1 tablespoon of minced fresh sage
- 2 teaspoons of minced fresh thyme
- 1/4 teaspoon of grated fresh nutmeg
- 1 (32 oz. ) container of Chicken broth salt and pepper





#### Instructions:

Prepare chestnuts by scoring the hull with a knife to make an X about 1/2 inches long through the flat side of each shell. Place nuts in a 10-by 15 inch roasting pan.

Bake in a 400 oven until nuts are no longer starchy-tasting (cut open 1 to test), 25-30 minutes. Wrap hot nuts in a towel enclosed in a plastic bag; let stand for about 15 minutes. Remove 1 warm nut at a time and use a short bladed knife to pull off shell and as much brown skin as possible; discard shell and skin. Coarsely chop or crumble chestnuts.

Bake the cornbread according to the Jiffy Cornbread Mix recipe. (I use an iron pan.)

Meanwhile, in a 10-12 in frying pan over medium heat, fry the 6-8 bacon slices until browned, about 4 to 6 minutes; remove from pan and drain on paper towels. When cool, crumble and add to the baked cornbread.

Use the reserve bacon grease in the frying pan to saute' add onion, celery, and green onions; stir occasionally until clear, 5-7 minutes. Add sage, thyme, nutmeg, and chestnuts; stir occasionally until vegetables are lightly browned, about 5 minutes longer. Scrape mixture into pan with cornbread.

In a large bowl, gently mix the vegetables, crumbled bacon and cornbread; then add 1 (32 oz.) container of Chicken broth for a moist dressing. Season dressing with salt and pepper to taste. Spoon into a shallow 3 quart casserole dish and cover tightly with aluminum foil.

Bake in a 350 oven until hot in the center (about 150 °), 35-40 minutes. For a crusty top, uncover dressing for the last 20 to 25 minutes. If making dressing up to 1 day ahead, chill airtight, then bake for 50-60 minutes.

Yield: Makes 10-12 servings, Enjoy!

Jennifer Dasinger contributed to this article.

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## HUTTO CAMP OFFICERS

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Commander	James R. Blackston
1 <sup>st</sup> Lt. Cmd	Trent Harris
2nd Lt. Cmd	Jeremy Jackson
Adjutant	John McGraw
Chaplain	Larry Elliott
Judge Advocate	Cherokee Brasher
Communications	Tony Pennington
Facebook	Brandon Prescott - Jeremy Jackson
Quartermaster	Billy Kinchelow
Flag Committee Chairman	Trent Harris
Newsletter Editor	James Blackston

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Website: [www.huttocamp.com](http://www.huttocamp.com)

Facebook - [Hutto Camp](#)

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