

# USDA Forest Service Botany in the News

## Preserving healthy butternut on the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest (NF)

**Who (*partners*):** Oconto River Seed Orchard (ORSO), Chequamegon-Nicolet NF, Northern Research Station, other land owners in Wisconsin.

**What (*species*):** *Juglans cinerea*, butternut.

**When:** 2005 to current

**Where:** Region 9, Wisconsin

**How:** Employees of the Oconto River Seed Orchard searched for healthy butternut at locations where it had been recorded on the Chequamegon-Nicolet NF. Twigs were collected from the tops of healthy trees in mid-winter and grafted onto black walnut seedlings. These grafted plants will be planted in the field at the seed orchard. This planting will preserve healthy butternut and eventually provide seed for butternut restoration projects. We hope to expand this effort to other National Forests and non-Forest Service lands.

**Why:** Butternut canker was discovered in Wisconsin in the 1970s. Since then it has infected almost every butternut in the state and killed large numbers. Researchers have discovered that a few butternuts appear to have natural resistance to the disease, but these trees are threatened by old age and competition.

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Searching for healthy butternut on the Chequamegon-Nicolet NF in Wisconsin.



Collecting twigs from the top of a healthy butternut with a large slingshot.



Twigs from healthy butternuts that have been grafted onto walnut rootstock at ORSO.