

Pecans



The pecan is Texas' state tree, and Gonzales is an excellent area for pecans. In fact, pecans are native to this area. They do particularly well in river bottom areas but grow well in most environments including in your yard - with proper care. Note that it takes about eight to 10 years for a pecan tree to produce about 15 pounds of nuts, and that pecans require frequent zinc spraying for rapid tree growth and lots of water (especially in August and September, until after the shuck splits).

Even though pecans are wind-pollinated, they are only fair at self-pollination. You shouldn't have to be too concerned about having a second variety of tree available as a pollinator if you have a pecan within $\frac{1}{4}$ mile; otherwise, you will probably want one pecan which is an early pollinator, and one which sheds pollen later on.

Native pecans are much less labor intensive but you cannot predict the quality of the nut you will have. Many native pecans produce small nuts of less than premium quality. For that reason, the trees that you will find with named varieties are often preferable since you know the type and quality of nut you will receive. Improved woods are grafted to good root stocks to provide you with a superior, and predictable, nut. If you are growing the tree, however, for shade or wildlife, then you may find that native pecans are a better choice for you.

Many people complain to us that they don't get consistent crops from their improved pecans. Pecans are alternate bearing, meaning that they really only produce a full crop every other year. So, you should not expect to receive much of a crop every other year. This is natural for the tree and there isn't much you can do to influence that.

Pecans are massively large trees so provide a large place for them. Large trees can

grow to 120 feet and four feet in diameter. They have long tap roots and must be grown in long pots if they are to be transplanted successfully. Pecans are highly desirable trees, but as members of the juglone trees, they can have a suppressive effect on certain other plants. You should be aware of how this attribute can affect other plants in its immediate area and how to manage this issue. With a little forethought, you can easily manage this issue.

You can learn more about this issue on this website under “Fun Stuff”, “Neat Stuff”, “Chemical Warfare in Plants”.

Pecans are susceptible to a disease called scab. It usually won't kill the tree but it will certainly cut down on the tree's production, so we select trees for this area based on their nuts but also their resistance to scab.

The trees we recommend here are improved, grafted varieties:

Kanza: This tree has excellent scab resistance. The nuts are a little smaller than others but have excellent quality.

Caddo: This variety has excellent yield and very good quality. It is an early variety that will yield earlier in the season than other varieties.

Lakota: Lakota is a light airy tree with a high canopy that may please you more in your yard since it will not be as shady as some others. It has excellent nut quality in yield and is expected to very resistant to scab but it is a somewhat new variety so it's long-term scab resistance is yet to be determined.”

Desirable: Desirable is a longtime favorite, admired for its quality nut and the fact that it is a lovely tree. The nuts are large and crack easily. The tree is a heavy producer and bears earlier than many other varieties. It is also disease resistant but it needs a little more water than other varieties.

For more about growing pecans, see the website-

aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/fruit-nut