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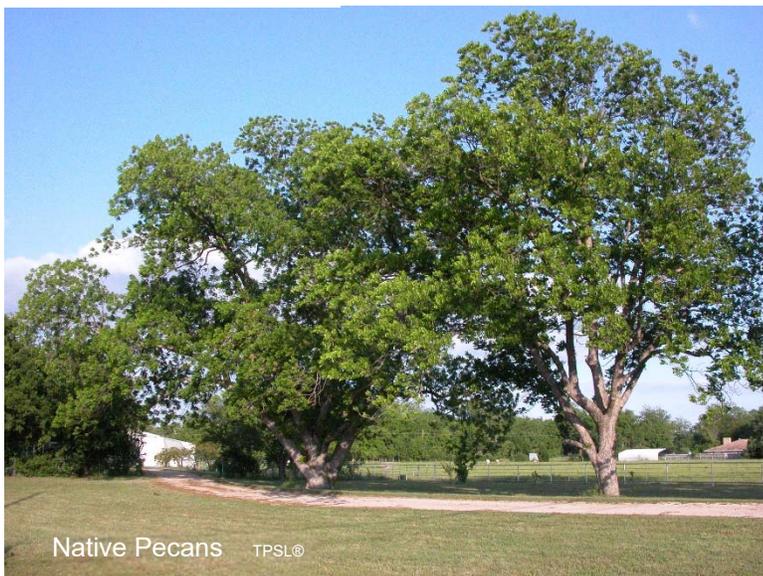
PECANS

**AGRONOMY
NOTE**

GENERAL CULTIVATION AND NUTRITION

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The Pecan is one of the most popular of the large backyard shade trees but is of great commercial value as well, being cultivated on large and small scales for nut production. Native to America, pecans are commonly found along river bottoms in Midwestern, eastern and southern states. Both native and varietal selections are used for nut production. However, most often, and most profitably, grafted varietal types generally referred to as “papershell” are used for nut production. On a commercial scale, management can include marketing the valuable saw wood when underperforming trees need to be replaced. There are very many grafted varieties from which to choose, some growing better in



particular regions. Whether planted as an ornamental shade tree, or for nut production, the pecan must be managed with a good nutrition and irrigation plan to ensure it lives up to its double status as a beautiful tree that produces tasty, healthful nuts.

This widespread appeal results in pecans being planted in varied soil and environmental conditions, reflecting the resilience of the tree. Despite their widespread adaptability, they often don't do very well in areas where insufficient rainfall or poor soil drainage exists, and do much better when they receive adequate care. Nutritional issues with pecans go well beyond the usual N-P-K issues of growing other crops. Anyone considering commercial production of pecans must be willing to monitor the trees and soil conditions to ensure the best possible production. Successful production practices are characterized by pro-active and continuous attention to the needs of the trees.

Starting Off Right

Good tree management starts with selecting the best location for the orchard. The best soils include deep sandy loams overlying clay (best for water storage). A site with good air drainage and surface water drainage is ideal, so look to hilltops and pastures for the best location. Proper planting techniques include a pre-plant soil test to determine which nutrients should be placed into the planting hole. These will normally include the major nutrients, **Nitrogen (N), Phosphorus (P), Potassium (K), Calcium (Ca), Magnesium (Mg), Sulfur (S)**, and several “trace” elements, **Zinc (Zn), Nickel (Ni), Iron (Fe), Boron (B), Copper (Cu), and Manganese (Mn)**. Don't be fooled by the term, “trace”. Trees **require** these elements; they're just needed in smaller amounts than other elements. Please refer to the nutrient deficiencies photos. Pecans do best in soils with a slightly acidic pH, around 6. The photo above attests to the durability of pecans. These are growing in tight, high pH (7.6), heavy clay blackland soil with little drainage. Many weeks can pass without rain. The nuts are typically diseased, poor or nil. These trees have a lot of problems, particularly in the micronutrients and traces. Mix the recommended nutrients with the soil removed from the hole. If planting multiple trees, make sure they are placed no closer than **50 feet** from each other. In an orchard setting, spacing may be very much closer – see Orchard Notes at the end of this paper.

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