

PECAN TREES

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For Southern Arizona Landscaping

Pecan trees are very desirable for southern Arizona for home landscaping due to their beauty, shade, and nut production. Most varieties are adapted to elevations up to 4,000 feet.

The pecan tree is recognized as slow growing in comparison to other trees. However, its abundance of shade and nut crop will reward the grower for his patience. The pecan tree is long lived. In its natural habitat along rivers of south central United States, it grows for more than one hundred years. The pecan's branching habit permits efficient air movement through the tree, resulting in cooling effect.

Need Pollinizers

Most pecan varieties require an appropriate pollinizer variety for maximum nut production. Female flowers located at the tips of twigs develop nuts after pollination. The male flowers, called catkins, are located a short distance back and wind carries pollen to the female flowers.

The time of pollen shedding and receptiveness of female flowers of a given variety often do not coincide. Thus appropriate pollen shedding varieties, *Halbert* or *Success*, may be required.

The selection of appropriate varieties for good nut production is very important.

Western Schley is the leading western pecan for a wide range of elevation. Nuts are large, thin shelled and of good quality.

Burkett is adapted to the Safford area, where excellent quality nuts with very good flavor are produced. At lower elevations the nuts are subject to splitting and pre-harvest germination causing bitterness, especially serious during warm fall seasons.



Male and female flowers are produced on the same tree but in different locations. At the tip of the shoot the female flowers after pollination develop into edible nuts. The male flowers, called catkins located in lower portion of photograph, shed pollen carried by wind currents for pollination.

Mahan is very popular due to the very large size of nut and the trees come into heavy production early. At higher elevations the nuts often do not fill properly.

Halbert, in addition to serving as a good pollinizer, produces heavy crops of small nuts with good edible quality over a wide range of elevation.

Success produces medium-large nuts of medium-thin shells well filled; however, the variety tends to alternate bearing. The tree is especially appropriate for shade in home landscaping.

San Saba Improved is becoming more popular and the nuts are medium-small with good flavor.

A new variety known as *H-18* (*Mahan* crossed with *Bradley*) has been included in commercial orchard plantings in Arizona. The productivity and quality characteristics have not yet been established for Arizona conditions.

New varieties are being developed through breeding programs in New Mexico and Texas, and promising new lines are being tested at the University of Arizona experimental farms in the pecan growing districts.

Allow Growing Room

Young pecan trees are available at local nurseries during the winter months. Since these are bare-rooted, they must be plant-

ed immediately and irrigated at once. The tree should be planted at least 25 feet from a building and approximately twice this distance from another tree. Prune back after planting to leave 4 to 5 buds above the bud union and whitewash.

After planting, apply one pound of zinc sulfate in the basin to prevent pecan rosette. Additional applications may be required in subsequent years, depending upon symptoms of rosette.

Pecan trees produce a deep tap root system so it is important that they be planted only in areas having deep soils. Pecans are not recommended for areas having caliche soil several feet below the surface. Plantings made in these soils do not produce vigorous growth, since the root distribution will be restricted within the confines of the tree hole.

Production Begins in 5 Years

Production of pecan nuts usually begins 4 to 5 years after planting, depending on variety. In 10 years, the spread of the tree will approximate 20 feet, with considerable shade during summer and fall. Leaf defoliation in December allows desirable sunshine in winter.

Pecan trees can provide desirable summer shade for livestock. Some commercial pecan orchards with Bermuda sod are effectively used for grazing.

