

The Pecan As A Money Maker For Arizona

By FRANK T. BINGHAM, '25

A Graceful Shade Tree That Pays Its Way—Long Growing Season of Our Lower Valleys Makes for Early Maturity—Fifteen Hundred Acres Set Out to Paper-Shell Varieties Last Year—Substantial Increase in Acreage Predicted for Next Year

PECANS have found a home in Arizona. Originally introduced into the State, they have found a congenial soil and climate in most of our lower valleys, and are making records as to growth of tree and bearing qualities that compare favorably with the best from any section of the country.

Scattered here and there over the State are several orchards ranging from eight to fifteen years of age, and the rapid expansion of the pecan industry of the State, which has been especially marked during the last four or five years, is due to the behavior of these few older orchards. Nuts from one of these older orchards located near Yuma, Arizona, have brought as high as one dollar a pound on the market as choice nuts. Of course, this price is exceptional, and should not be taken as a standard, but pecan growers in this section of the country can expect to obtain a good price for their product, due to the nature of the Arizona market and the limited supply of nuts of the better quality. Thus it is not at all surprising that where a single orchard crop brought such a phenomenal price, that people would begin to think about setting out orchards, on the assumption that what one orchard does, may, under similar circumstances, be duplicated by a hundred, or even a thousand, others.

Contrary to the opinion of a well known nut specialist who is quoted as saying, "The future development in Arizona, as well as in California, must compete with the cheap land and labor and the tremendous development in the South," it is becoming quite evident that Arizona, with her fertile soil and abundant irrigation water, will be able to produce a larger and better pecan than a considerable area of this great Southland. To substantiate this statement partially, the following incident is related:

A few nuts of the Success variety, produced in the Yuma Valley, were sent to a large nursery company in Texas. These nuts numbered 28 to the pound. The nursery officials, upon the receipt of these nuts, wanted to know where in the world such



A MAGNIFICENT ORCHARD OF MATURE PECANS SHOWING THE IMMENSE PROPORTIONS THESE TREES ATTAIN

pecans grew, as they had never seen such large specimens of this variety before. Later \$1,000 was offered by the nursery company for the tree that produced the nuts, as a source of budwood. This tree at fifteen years of age produced 110 pounds of nuts running 32 to the pound tree run. The question might well be asked, could the nursery produce trees from buds secured from this tree that would produce pecans of such size and quality if planted in Texas, or would they have to buy up Arizona's soil, climate and water in addition?

A. F. Kinison, horticulturist at the University of Arizona, estimates that there has been fully 1,500 acres of pecans set out in Arizona during the season just closed. Several orchards of 80 acres each are included in this. It can, however, be safely stated that there are now 2,000 acres in pecan orchards in the State, and that the acreage will undoubtedly be increased to a considerable extent this coming season.

With the great demand for nursery stock, which is not grown within the State to any extent, the farmer has been an easy prey for the unscrupulous nursery man. Itinerant, self-styled pecan specialists, and unreliable nursery representatives from without the State, have been waxing

fat from their proceeds. Almost any kind of stock has been sold for standard varieties. Just recently an extension worker was called to view an orchard which did not seem to show marked signs of development, and, upon examination, found that the farmer had procured and set out a miscellaneous planting of seedlings for a known and proven variety. In this instance the farmer was compelled to top work his entire orchard at a great expense and loss of time. Fortunately, for instances such as this, we have in horticulture the practices of budding and grafting, which reproduce unerringly every characteristic of the plant from which the cion or bud wood is selected. But the great loss of time in the development of his orchard is the heart-breaker to the average farmer.

The popularity of the pecan in Arizona is due not only to the high price which the crop brings, but also to the fact that intercropping may be resorted to for a number of years, thereby enabling the farmer to subsist while he is materially increasing the value of his land. Crops may be grown between the rows for the first six or seven years without serious damage to the trees. A number of

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A PROSPECTUS OF THE PECAN INDUSTRY IN ARIZONA

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farmers are interplanting with grapes, while others are using alfalfa or some cultivated crop. The cultivation given the trees by interplanting affords a very satisfactory tree growth, while at the same time keeps down disease and insect pests to a considerable extent. Legumes are used in some instances, where the soil needs improving.

Thanks to the long growing season in Arizona, pecans come into bearing much earlier than in other sections of the country. It is not uncommon for some trees of the budded varieties to bear fruit the second year after transplanting from the nursery row to the permanent orchard location. Instances are known of a budded tree, five years from planting, yielding 15 pounds of nuts; one seven years old yielding 25 pounds; one nine years old yielding 70 pounds, and one fifteen years old yielding 100 pounds. Seedlings much older have been known to yield as much as 250 pounds annually. However, a crop of any commercial importance cannot be expected until the sixth or seventh year. In the South Atlantic States, commercial returns are not realized in less than twelve years.

Field plantings in Arizona are made from November to March. However, early winter plantings are being favored, as such plantings allow for a better root establishment before the leaves begin to appear in the spring, thus cutting down mortality to a considerable extent.

The most popular type of nursery tree seems to be the lateral rooted one, which, due to the abundance of small, tough lateral roots, is the better enabled to withstand the rigors of transportation and transplanting.

Many farmers, and even city residents, have adopted the commendable practice of planting the pecan in their yards for both shade and ornament, and they have found that, although a little slow in growth, the pecan never stops until it lifts its proud head above all other trees. Its symmetrical form, its graceful branches, the straight trunk and its foliage, make it a thing of beauty unsurpassed as an ornamental—yet also producing a fine crop of the choicest of nuts.

Pecan culture in Arizona, like in many other sections of the country,

is still in the experimental stage, but even at that, several promising varieties of paper shell nuts have proven their liking for the hot, dry climate of Arizona. The Success variety seems to do remarkably well here, in spite of the fact that it is a coastal variety, and we are having equal success with the Schley and Delmas. There are also several plantings of the Stuart and Frotcher varieties, which look very promising.

A member of the staff of the Division of Edible Nuts, Texas Department of Agriculture, is quoted as saying: "We believe that you are making a mistake in using coastal varieties in Arizona, as they are a failure in Texas. We would suggest that you try Halbert, Burkett, Western Schley, Onliwon, San Saba Improved, Sovereign, Mosty, Alexander, Govett, Bowers, and other Texas varieties." While the writer agrees with the Texas authorities that many of their varieties are of high excellence, and should be planted in Arizona, particularly for the shelled pecan trade, he also believes that we have sufficient evidence of the coastal varieties, such as Success, Schley and Delmas, doing well with us, as to justify the planting of these varieties for the fancy trade.

The question as to whether pecan plantings in Arizona on a large commercial scale can be made to pay is a matter yet to be solved by time alone. However, the future of the infant industry looks rather bright, and the writer will venture to say that there is prosperity in store for the man who will care for the pecan tree as well as a citrus tree is supposed to be cared for, for the man who first of all loves trees like the man who wrote:

I think I shall never see
A poem as lovely as a tree.
A tree whose hungry mouth is prest
Against the earth's sweet flowing
breast;
A tree that looks at God all day,
And lifts her leafy arms to pray;
A tree that may in summer wear
A nest of robins in her hair;
Upon whose bosom snow has lain,
Who intimately lives with rain;
Poems are made by fools like me,
But only God can make a tree.

WASTE OIL GOOD MITE KILLER

Waste oil removed from the crank case of tractors and automobiles can be put to good use freeing poultry flocks of mites, advises the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture.

An oil spray can be used effectively to kill the mites found on and near roosts. Almost any oil can be used, but, since many flock owners have automobiles, the waste crank case oil is the most practical material. Besides oil, a strong lime sulphur, such as that used in the dormant spraying of fruit trees, can be used to kill poultry mites.

When it comes to chicken lice, specialists state that sodium fluoride is perhaps the most satisfactory material to use. This material is a white powder which, if carefully handled, is harmless to man, but is an effective lice killer. During the fall, chickens are most successfully treated by the so-called pinch method. Seven pinches of the powder are used on each chicken, a pinch being the amount of powder one can hold between the thumb and forefinger. The first pinch is rubbed into the feathers on the back of the neck, the second and third on the back near the base of either wing, the fourth on the rump, the fifth under the vent, and the sixth and seventh under and around either thigh. Care must be exercised to keep the dust out of the eyes and vent. Usually one application of the chemical gives a complete control.

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