

GROW THE RIGHT PECANS!

Carya illinoensis

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Pecan trees are ubiquitous in the South, just like sweet tea and biscuits! These beautiful, shapely trees provide a cool canopy in the heat of summer and deliver delicious nuts in the autumn.

The pecan was designated the official tree of Texas in 1919 although it is originally a native of the Mississippi Valley and its tributaries.

Pecans are budded onto rootstock to yield the best nuts and generally require two varieties for optimum pollination. Pecans can reach 25 feet within 5-7 years after planting and will begin to bear nuts after 10 years.

Trees should be planted during the dormant season (from late November to February) to allow root growth before spring. They can be susceptible to leaf spot and scab.



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Pecans thrive in southeast Texas, living to be very large trees towering 60-100 feet with a spread of 40-60 feet. Plant in well-drained soil with a pH of 5.5-7.0, in full sun.

Keep soil moist while the tree is getting established and water once a week when rainfall is insufficient. Fertilize after the establishment year with a fertilizer containing zinc. Prune to remove dead, diseased, or damaged branches. Good varieties for this area:

* DESIRABLE - the benchmark for quality, consistently producing excellent quality, crunchy kernels. Produce a large, well-filled nut, with an easy-to-crack medium shell. Good selection for humid areas. Generally self-fertile but will produce more nuts if pollinated with another variety.

* KANZA - an early maturing native pecan producing compact, easily shelled nuts with outstanding flavor. Prefers moist soils. Cold hardy and disease resistant. Pollinate with 'Pawnee'.

* KIOWA - a slower-growing variety. A well-formed tree with heavy crops of thin-shelled, excellent quality nuts. The shell markings make this a very attractive nut. 'Kiowa' cross-pollinates well with 'Desirable'.

* PAWNEE - a cultivar created in Brownwood, TX in 1963 and is the most commonly planted variety in North America. Smaller growth habit (30 feet tall and wide) makes this an excellent option for those with limited space. The nuts are large with a sweet kernel. A great pollinator for 'Kanza'.