

PECAN

Carya illinoensis
(Wangenh) K. Koch

Plant Symbol = CAIL2

Contributed by: USDA NRCS East Texas Plant
Materials Center



Robert Mohlenbrock
USDA, NRCS, Wetland Science Institute
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Alternate Names

Sweet pecan, Illinois nut, faux hickory, pecan
hickory, pecan nut, pecan tree

Uses

Nut production, wildlife habitat enhancement,
esthetics, shade tree, wood and veneer production

Status

Please consult the PLANTS Web site and your State
Department of Natural Resources for this plant's
current status (e.g. threatened or endangered species,
state noxious status, and wetland indicator values).

Description and Adaptation

Pecan is a large tree to 150 feet with a broad rounded
crown. It is the largest of all the hickories. It
produces flowers from March to May with both male
and female flowers on the same tree. Leaves are
alternate, odd-pinnately compound with 9-17 leaflets.
The fruit is a nut 1 to 2 inches long and ½ to 1 inch in
diameter. The nut is encased in a thin husk which is
divided into sections which open in the fall at
maturity. The bark is grayish brown to light brown
with flattened ridges and narrow fissures. The wood
is reddish brown with lighter sapwood, brittle and
hard. Pecan grows best in loam soils which are well
drained without prolonged flooding. Pecan is
adapted to areas with a minimum of 30 inches of
average rainfall.

Establishment

Due to stratification requirements for the nut to
sprout, establishment is best with nursery grown
seedlings which are planted in the fall or early winter.
In mass plantings bare root seedlings can be planted
by hand or machine. Care should be taken with root
placement and planting depth. The root collar should
be planted at the same depth as grown in the nursery.

Management

Weed control and fertilization are important
considerations for maximizing nut production.
Fertility should be added according to a leaf analysis
or you can use the rule of thumb of 1 pound of
balanced fertilizer per 1 inch of trunk diameter.
Fertilizer should be applied just prior to bud break.
Pecan trees have a high requirement for zinc. Zinc
should be applied by foliar application at the
beginning of bud break and every 14 days through
early summer.

Pests and Potential Problems

Several insects need to be monitored. Insects
attacking the nut include; pecan weevil, pecan nut
casebearer, and hickory shuck worm. Pecan scab
disease is a potential problem.

Environmental Concerns

None

Cultivars, Improved, and Selected Materials (and area of origin)

Numerous cultivars are available for nut production, disease resistance, and adaptability. The USDA Agricultural Research Service names their cultivars after Native American tribes.

Websites

<http://msucares.com/pubs/infosheets/is0439.pdf>

http://pecankernel.tamu.edu/pecan_insects/pests/index.html

<http://www.noble.org/Ag/Horticulture/BestPecan/Index.htm>

http://www.lsuagcenter.com/en/lawn_garden/commercial_horticulture/fruits_nuts/Homeowners+Guide+for+Fertilizing+Pecan+Trees+in+Louisiana.htm

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Edited: 090107.jsp

For more information about this and other plants, please contact your local NRCS field office or Conservation District, and visit the PLANTS Web site <<http://plants.usda.gov>> or the Plant Materials Program Web site <<http://Plant-Materials.nrcs.usda.gov>>

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