



Urban Harvest
Gardening for good.

Pecan

Category:	Temperate; deciduous
Hardiness:	Easily withstands freezes
Fruit Family:	Nuts
Light:	Full sun
Size:	35'-80'H x 35'-80'W average, depending on variety
Soil:	Well-drained
Planting:	Plant during dormancy in Jan – Feb



Pecans are native to Texas and are therefore well adapted to our climate and our soils. Pecans can easily be grown in any well-drained part of the Houston area.

Pecans require cross-pollination. If you have space for two trees, this is optimum. But you will have pollination as long as there are pecan trees nearby.

Pecan trees are amazingly productive and are a nice shade tree for the urban landscape. The nuts are nutritious and bountiful. They are very long-lived. A pecan planted now will provide a legacy of nuts for fresh eating and baking for generations to come.

Care of Pecan Trees

Planting: Pecans have deep taproots. Select a planting area that is well-drained or create a raised planting bed. Remove all vegetation within a minimum three-foot diameter circle.

Locate the root flare; the point where the trunk transitions to the roots. Remove any nursery soil above this point, making sure the roots are still covered. Trim any roots that appear to be circling the root ball and any broken or clearly dead roots. Measure the depth of the resulting root ball.

Dig a hole that is wide and deep enough to easily accommodate the root ball. The sides of the hole should be tapered outward, not straight down (visualize a wok, not a stock pot) with the widest point at the top of the hole. The deepest point of the hole should be no deeper than your measurement of the root ball. This will allow the root flare to sit at the soil level and insures that the graft scar (located several inches about the root flare) will always be several inches above the soil level.

Place the root ball in the prepared hole. Check for straightness. Position the lowest branch you have decided to keep facing southwest. Backfill $\frac{1}{2}$ of the depth with existing soil – no amendments should

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be added during planting. Water well and allow it to drain. Fill the remaining ½ of the depth. Tamp the soil, but do not pack hard. Water in well and water every day for a few days unless it rains. A mulch of composted native mulch or rotted leaves is highly recommended. Do not use bark mulch.

Pruning: Once the tree is planted, prune back the trunk about ½ and remove all side branches, making sure there are still several healthy buds on the stem. The cut needs to be made just above a bud scar. Early in the summer, there will be a number of shoots developing. The straightest healthiest and most upright shoot should be chosen to become the central leader (main trunk) and all other upright shoots should be removed. Leave the horizontal shoots. Continue central leader training for the first five years to develop a strong framework and full canopy. This is a good training guide:

http://aces.nmsu.edu/pubs/_h/H605/welcome.html

Production: Pecan trees may begin to produce their first crop four years from planting. Production should increase every year thereafter, reaching full production in approximately 10 years.

Watering: All fruit trees should get consistent water in the first few years. Watering can come from rain or a hose. During the first year, if the soil under the mulch is dry, provide the tree with about 7 gallons of water per week, preferably once a week. Water slowly. This can be a little more than 3 minutes with a ½" hose and 1 ½ minutes with a 5/8" hose. Remember to account for rainfall when determining how much to water with a hose.

Fertilization: We recommend an organic program for fruit trees in the home landscape. For a small number of trees, use a slow release organic fertilizer, available at local independent nurseries. If you have a large number of trees, or a small number of trees and a limited budget, you can use cottonseed meal, available at nurseries and feed stores. Fertilizers should be broadcast under the entire canopy space of the tree. An organic mulch of compost and native mulch, or well-rotted leaves should be maintained at all times as part of your nutrition program.

Slow release organic fertilizer: 1st year – ½ cup; 2nd & 3rd years – 3 pounds; subsequent years - 20 to 40 pounds per 1000 square feet. Apply every 3 – 4 months.

Cottonseed meal: 1st year – 1.5 cups; 2nd year – 3 cups; 3rd year – 6 cups; mature trees – 3 to 6 quarts per inch of trunk measured at the base. Apply in February and May.

Harvesting: The nut is ready when the husks open fully. They will fall from the tree and should be gathered regularly. If they are allowed to lay on the ground too long, especially in damp condition, they can decline in quality. Pecans should be dried before shelling to improve nut quality and storability. Lay the unshelled pecans out in a thin layer in a dry, shady area. It will take 7 – 10 days to dry completely. There are several excellent pecan shellers on the market including the Texan York Nut Sheller available online. You can also freeze partially cracked pecans in the shell.

Winter Protection: Pecan trees do not require winter protection. They require a period of chilling for best production. Pecan bud break will occur with fewer than the required chill hours, but there may be uneven bud break that leads to poor pollination.

Varieties of Pecans for the 2020 Sale

Choctaw, Pawnee

Varieties of Pecans for the Houston Area Climate

Choctaw Pecan - Developed in Texas in 1946. High oil content, 60% kernel, thin hull. Large, attractive, well adapted to Houston. The best “yard” pecan due to its beautiful foliage. Mature height & width is 60’-80’. Average 45 nuts per pound. Bears late October. **300-350 chill hours.**

Desirable Pecan - Vigorous growing, disease resistant tree. Good sized, soft shelled nut that is crisp and firm. Works well in humid areas. Very popular pecan with high oil content. Average 48 nuts per pound. Mature height & width is 60’-80’. Ripens Oct – Nov. **300 – 500 chill hours.**

Oconee Pecan - Released in 1989 for use in the southern U.S. pecan belt. There are an average of 48 nuts per pound. 56% kernel. Excellent survival rate when subjected to cold weather. Excellent cracking quality. Use Sumner for Pollination or another variety.

Pawnee – The most planted pecan in North America. This cross was made in Brownwood, TX in 1963. Bears large, full-kernel pecans in September; 2 – 3 weeks ahead of other varieties. 44 nuts per lb with 58% kernel; kernels golden in color. Outstanding resistance to yellow aphids.

Sumner Pecan - This is an excellent pecan for both home and orchard. It is noted for its resistance to disease and high quality yield on nuts. The pecans mature in late fall and bear heaviest if cross pollinated with another variety. Use Oconee for pollination or another variety.