**Early Season Pecan Disease Management**

Early Season Pecan Disease is just a fancy way of saying “SCAB”. While many folks that live in none pecan growing counties may think of scab as something their kids have on their knees, most folks in Comanche County hear the word scab, they think of pecans. Scab can be a very economically important disease for pecan producers and a cause of disappointment and aggravation for homeowners with pecan trees. If the El Nino forecast holds up, this is setting up to be a heavy scab year for pecan growers.

Scab is characterized by small, dark, circular, olive to black spots on foliage and nut shucks. These spots may fuse to form large, blackened areas. If the disease is not controlled, entire crops of more susceptible cultivars and of some native and seedling trees may be lost during periods of frequent rain or extended dew. In new plantings the use of more resistant varieties can provide an increased level of scab protection. However, in high scab years, fungicide sprays are still required. Unfortunately, over the years most resistant varieties will become less resistant due to mutations of the fungus over many years. Some of our favorite pecan cultivars are highly susceptible to scab, Burkett, Western and Wichita are a few. To prevent scab in these varieties extra management is required. This would include additional fungicide sprays, and close attention to the promotion of drainage and air movement in the orchard.

Cultivars with known resistance do provide you with an extra degree of protection, but still require close management. According to the Noble Research Institute in a normal year even these cultivars require 3 fungicide sprays. The first of these is made at the comple­tion of pollination, this can normally be made along with first application for pecan nut casebearer. A first cover application is made two to three weeks after that and is followed by a second cover application two to three weeks later.

This has been a short and incomplete introduction into an important topic. To get a more complete understanding of scab and scab management you will want to be sure to attend the Pecan Production Program this Friday.

**Pecan Production Program**

This program will focus on scab and disease management in pecans, nutrition and improving nut quality. We have a couple of excellent speakers this year. Monte Nesbitt, State Pecan Specialist, will be talking about scab and disease management. Dr. Charles Graham will be talking about “Combining nutrition with other cultural practices to improve nut quality”. We will finish-up with a questions and answer session.

The program will be held Friday March 8th at the Comanche Community Center. Registration will begin at 9:30 and the program will run until 1:00. There is no charge and lunch will be covered by our excellent local sponsors. 2 CEU’s 1 IPM and 1 general will be offered.