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**Let’s get to pickin’!**

**January 1 2019,** (Haskell, TX)– Cooler months in Texas mean harvesting time for crops including cotton, corn, and a Texas favorite… pecans! With pecans being eaten raw and as a part of many delicious recipes, pecan production has become a large industry in Texas.

Yearlong cold weather in northern states make southern states the appropriate place for pecan production - In 2014, Georgia and New Mexico produced a total of 143 million pounds of pecans alone. Larry Stein, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Horticulturist, said Texas is also a major contributor to the pounds of pecans grown each year, ranking second or third nationally in total pecan production of approximately 60 million pounds. Texas’ warm climate is a haven for pecan trees, especially in the southern cities that have mild winters and can harvest year-round.

A common tool used during harvesting is trunk shakers, which shake the pecans out of the trees and onto the ground. Harvesters then come by and pick up the pecans, along with twigs, leaves and other trash. Before bagging, the crop collected by the harvesters is run through cleaners to separate the trash from the pecans.

The popularity of pecans has seen an increase over the past few years as consumers learn more about the health benefits associated with the nut. According to the USDA, pecans contain over 19 vitamins and minerals, including Vitamin A, Vitamin E, Calcium, and Zinc. Nutrition facts for a one-ounce serving of pecans are:

* 196 calories
* 20.4g fat
* 2.6g protein
* 2.7g dietary fiber
* 0g sodium

Not only are pecans high in nutritional value, but they are also essential to main dishes and desserts. AgriLife Extension’s Dinner Tonight offers a wide variety of recipes that include pecans as a prime ingredient, such as Pecan Coffee Cake, Cinnamon Walnut Pecan Bites, and Homemade Cranberry Pecan Sauce. If you plan to incorporate pecans into your recipe, Dinner Tonight recommends following these three easy steps for cracking your pecans:

1. Boil pecans for 10 minutes
2. Drain and let the pecans cool for 10 minutes
3. Crack with easy and enjoy!

For more recipes and tips, visit [dinnertonight.tamu.edu](https://dinnertonight.tamu.edu/) or pathtotheplate.tamu.edu

**Sources: https://www.usda.gov/**