HOMEOWNER PECAN CARE

The pecan is a very attractive, high quality shade tree for home landscapes. However, many people want their trees to produce pecans as well as provide shade and beauty. Consequently, this bulletin provides information about pecan production on landscape trees. You should bear in mind that home pecan production of consistent high quality nuts is a rather expensive proposition, usually costing about 3 times as much as the nuts bring on the retail market.

FERTILIZATION

Fertilization determines growth and thus determines production. Commercial producers try to get 7-15 inches of terminal growth each year. Few pecans are produced on trees having terminal growth less than 7 inches or more than 15 inches during the previous year. So let this year's growth determine your fertilization for next year.

Usually, 1/3 pound of actual nitrogen per inch of trunk diameter will provide adequate terminal growth. This would mean about 2 pounds of garden fertilizer having about 10% nitrogen, or 1 pound of amonium sulfate (21-0-0) per inch of trunk diameter.

The fertilizer should be applied to the lawn area beneath the outer third of the tree canopy, then watered well. Surface application is sufficient, or you can put the fertilizer in holes punched in the soil (which is more work, and not particularly advantageous--unless the soil is packed as it is in most lawns).

Late March is the ideal time to fertilize. Remember that additional fertilizer goes into the tree each time you fertilize the lawn.

Zinc is one element pecans need badly, so we usually apply it with pesticides during April and May. Soil applications of zinc are seldom sufficient.

WATER

Lack of sufficient water in late spring-early summer causes small nuts. Insufficient water in August and September causes poor filling of the nuts.

Normal lawn watering is not enough for pecan trees. Soaker hoses should run for several hours each month during spring and fall and every two weeks from June through September (unless adequate rain falls).

PRUNING

Pruning to train and shape the tree is done during the first 4-5 years after planting (See Fact Sheet L-980). Limited corrective pruning is performed to remove damaged or diseased limbs, or limbs that are too low. This pruning can be done as needed, but the winter months are preferred. Try to avoid cutting limbs larger than 4 inches in diameter. Always make clean cuts, close to the trunk or branch to prevent rot or insect invasion.

INSECT AND DISEASE CONTROL

This is where the majority of homeowners lose their pecans--by spraying at the wrong times, using the wrong materials, or by poor spray coverage. Unfortunately, homeowners cannot obtain the best spray materials, nor do they have the proper spray materials, nor do they have the proper spray equipment to spray large pecan trees. To have them sprayed by someone with proper equipment and pesticides is usually quite expensive.

A minimum of 5 sprayings is essential to the production of quality pecans. Additional sprayings may be required in certain years. The following schedule points out when and what should be used for the minimum, plus the optional sprays.

	TIME TO USE	TO CONTROL	MATERIALS
MINIMUM			
1.	DORMANT Jan-Feb.	Phylloxera gall Other over-wintering insects	Oil
2.	PREPOLLINATION	Scab Zinc deficiency	Fungicide and Zinc
3.	CASEBEARER Early-Mid May	Pecan nut casebearer, scab, zinc deficiency	Insecticide,zinc and fungicide
4.	SECOND CASE-BEARER	Second generation casebearer, scab, aphids, other insects	Insecticide and Fungicide
5.	SHUCKWORM	Hickory shuckworm, pecan weevil, aphids, downey spot, other insects	Insecticide and Fungicide
OPTIONAL			

May-Sept.	Aphids, mites, web-worms	Insecticide
September 1	Hickory shuckworm, pecan weevil	Insecticide