NUTS LOSING THEIR GRIPS

It seems that people have names for every pecan on their trees this year, and when they lose a few it’s tough to handle. Well, we’ve got to understand that we can’t prevent the loss of some pecans. There are many factors influencing pecan drop. Dropping pecans are due to high wind and hail, lack of food stored in the tree, insufficient water, high temperature and finally insect damage. Recent winds have knocked off some nutlets. Another reason for pecan drop is lack of stored plant food in the tree system. If past years did not include fertilization, this may be partially responsible.

Perhaps the most important factor affecting nut drop is water and heat. Thorough applications of water are necessary to mature a quality crop. Water now influences size of pecans. A slow soaking of yard trees is the best way to apply water. It has been researched and written that a large tree, when carrying a crop of nuts can require 140 gallons of water a day in July and August when conditions such as low humidity and high temperatures prevail. That’s a lot of water, and remember, the .2 and .3 inches of rain is not enough for a fully loaded pecan tree.

During a period of stress due to the lack of food or water, the tree’s self defense mechanism engages. This results in nut drop. Trees are smarter than we give them credit for; if there is inadequate food or water to both sustain life and produce a crop, the tree saves its life by dropping pecans.

In some cases, it is an advantage to lose pecans in June. For instance, if a tree is heavily loaded with nutlets, they may be only partially filled due to their large
numbers and limited food supply. Therefore, if nuts drop from a heavily loaded
tree, the remaining pecans will be larger and better filled. Due to the alternate
bearing nature of pecan trees, this dropping may improve your nut set the following
year.

Plenty of water, food, good insect control, and a little help from nature could
produce a good crop of pecans this year for producers.