



PECAN

JUST FRUITS & EXOTICS

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INTRODUCTION

Pecans (*Carya illinoensis*) for Florida must meet one criterion: they must be scab resistant. Scab is a major cause of early leaf drop. Trees that don't hold their leaves until first frost can't store enough energy for the following year's crop. This is one reason pecans typically bear a heavy crop one year and a light one the next (commonly called alternate bearing). Another cause of alternate bearing is poor pollination. Pecans are wind pollinated, and rainy weather during bloom prevents the pollen from floating freely through the air from one tree to another, causing poor fruit set. Buy two for cross-pollination, choosing trees from the correct pollination groups.

USES IN THE LANDSCAPE

Create your own edible forest with the large, coarsely textured leaves and broad, umbrella-shaped canopy of chestnut, mixed with the willowy beauty of pecan and the broad, heart-shaped leaves of mulberry. Need shade? Plant pecans and cool your house the old-fashioned way.

PLANTING AND CULTURE

SITE SELECTION

Well-drained, deep soils are preferred, but pecans will grow on many soil types. Trees will grow more vigorously and produce more nuts in full sun. Two are required for pollination. Plant 30 feet apart for best results—these will be full-sized shade trees.

SOIL PREPARATION AND PLANTING

Pecans prefer slightly acid soil (pH 5.5-6.5). If you are in doubt about the acidity of your soil, take a sample to the Cooperative Extension Agent in your county for a soil test.

Dig a planting hole approximately twice as big as the pot and twice as deep. Enrich the planting hole with acid mulches like peat moss or pine bark mixed with soil dug from the hole (50:50 mix). Remove the plant from the pot, gently loosen the root ball and place in the planting hole. The trees should be planted **at or slightly above** the same level at which it grew in its pot. Fill the planting hole with the mix of soil and organic matter; gently tamp it in. Water thoroughly to settle

the roots and eliminate air pockets. Do NOT put fertilizer in the planting hole. Only apply fertilizer if it is the correct time of year (see Fertilization section below).

If desired, construct a water basin around the base of the tree approximately 36 inches in diameter. Mulch in spring and summer with approximately 4-6 inches of mulch.

FERTILIZATION

We use and recommend the Espoma line of organic fertilizers. Espoma's Citrus Tone is a good choice for pecan trees. When not available look for an organic mix that contains an analyst of roughly 5-2-6. Make sure they contain iron, zinc, manganese, magnesium, molybdenum, copper and boron. Pecans need extra zinc for good nut production. These minor elements are very important to plants and most soils are low in these elements. Application rates vary according to type and age of plant, so read the instructions on the bag and fertilize accordingly. Be sure to spread the fertilizer evenly under the entire canopy of the plant avoiding a 2-inch area around the trunk. Water or rake in. For Zones 8-9, fertilize 3 times each year in February, May and late July/early August. For plants further north (Zones 5-7), fertilize 2 times each year in March and June/July. Never fertilize after August (July for Zones 5-7) as this will promote new growth when the plant needs to go dormant.

WATER

The first year is a critical time for the establishment of a new tree. Water thoroughly twice a week on light soils and once a week on clay soils. Soak the entire root system deeply. Pecan should receive at least 1 inch of water each week for best growth and fruit production, but established trees are drought resistant.

PRUNING AND CARE

Occasional pruning is necessary to open the center of the tree for greater light and air penetration. Remove crossing, dead or damaged branches as needed.

HARVEST

Nuts should be allowed to thoroughly ripen on the tree for best quality and flavor. Wait until they fall from the tree to gather them.

VARIETY SELECTION – NEED TWO FOR POLLINATION

CAPE FEAR A graceful, shapely long-lived tree that bears fruit at an early age. Kernels do not break when the shell is cracked. 55-60 nuts per lb. Ripens late November. Needs pollinator (Elliott, Moreland, or Sumner). Zones 5A-9A

ELLIOTT Excellent scab resistance with high quality meat in a small nut. 65 nuts per lb. Ripens late November. Needs pollinator (Cape Fear or Jackson). Zones 5A-9A.

JACKSON Though not precocious (early bearing) or a particularly heavy producer, Jackson pecan trees have a willowy habit which makes them a lovely home orchard nut tree or shade tree. The light brown nuts are large, with excellent taste quality. Averages over 40 nuts lb. The tree is moderately resistant to scab and leaf disease, but the nut is highly resistant to nut diseases. Needs pollinator (Elliott, Moreland, or Stuart). Zones 5A-9A

MORELAND Possess the qualities we feel the home grower or grove owner values most. An excellent disease-resistant tree that will produce large, top-quality nuts. Moreland is a paper-shell of the same size and shape as Stuart. The nuts are heavy, averaging 45 nuts per pound with excellent kernel fill out. Oil content is extremely high, which gives it an extra rich flavor and good keeping qualities. Needs pollinator (Cape Fear or Jackson). Ripens late November. Zones 5A-9A.

SUMNER An early-producing tree suitable for close spaces. Produces large, high quality nuts that are easy to crack. Needs pollinator (Cape Fear). Ripens late November. Zones 5A-9A.