



HORTICULTURAL SERIES

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Pecan Cultivar Recommendations for Homes and Low Input Plantings

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Pecan Notes 2002-2

General Recommendations

Disease and insect pests of pecan trees are difficult to control without the aid of costly chemical pesticides and an “airblast” pecan tree sprayer. Pecan trees can be productive and enjoyable to homeowners or low input farms if the correct cultivar (variety) is chosen. Resistance to pecan scab disease is the primary concern when selecting cultivars for low input or non-spray plantings. Pecan scab is a fungus that is prevalent throughout the southeastern U.S., and can devastate the leaves and nuts of unsprayed, susceptible cultivars. Consideration should also be given to a cultivar’s susceptibility to downy spot disease, fungal leaf scorch (FLS), and black pecan aphids. Each of these pests severely defoliate susceptible trees in some years.

Growers who do not plan to provide supplemental irrigation to pecan trees should generally avoid cultivars which bear very large sized nuts. Small nut size is an advantage in dry years, because the tree requires less water and energy to completely fill its kernels.

Pecans have a dichogamous flowering habit and are classified into two types: protandrous (I); pollen shed first, and protogynous (II); pistillate flowers formed first. Effective pollination for good nut set is therefore dependent on having both types present in the planting. **Generally, the more different cultivars in the planting, the greater the chance for cross-pollination.** Therefore if a planting is planned to have four trees, it is recommended to plant four different cultivars. If the home or farm is located near a large pecan orchard, cross-pollination is less of a concern since pecan pollen is carried some distance by wind.

Table 1. Old pecan cultivars recommended for homes or low-input plantings

Cultivar	Poll. Type	Nuts per pound	Kernel percent	Scab Resist.	Downy Spot Resist..	FLS Resist.	Black Aphid Resist.
Candy	II	72	47	Good	?	?	Good
Curtis	II	85	54	Very Good	Good	Good	Good
Elliott	II	72	54	Excellent	Good	Good	Mod.
Farley	II	60	53	Good	Good	Good	Mod.
Gloria Grande	II	48	48	Excellent	Good	Good	Poor
Owens	I	50	48	Fair	?	?	Good

Table 2. New pecan cultivars for homes & low input plantings. *

Cultivar	Poll. Type	Origin	Nuts/lb.	% Kernel	Harvest Date (50% shuck split)	Scab Resistance
Jenkins	I	Seedling from North MS	55	53	Oct 15	Excellent
Syrup Mill	I	Seedling from Mobile County, AL	65	47		Excellent
Carter	II	Seedling from south MS	45	50	Oct18	Good
Gafford	I	Seedling from Central AL	56	50		Excellent
McMillan	II	Seedling from Baldwin County, AL	56	51	Oct 20	Good

*Much about these cultivars is unknown, including their pollination type, cropping regularity, and resistance to aphids. They are still under evaluation and have not been released by any university or breeding program. We do recommend them at this time, because their scab resistance is generally very good. Other problems may emerge upon further evaluation.

Obtaining These Cultivars

Of the cultivars presented here, Elliott and Farley, are usually found at nurseries that grow or sell pecan trees. Curtis, Candy, Owens, and Gloria Grande are less popular, and may have to be ordered from out-of-state nurseries. Most of the cultivars in Table 2 are propagated currently by only a few nurseries at this time. Contact nurseries one year in advance of planting to place orders. Seedling trees can be budded or grafted 2 to 4 years after planting. Graftwood for budding or grafting your own trees is available from many sources, including the following:

Pecan Graftwood Suppliers

Womacks Nursery, De Leon, Texas; (254) 893-6497
 Mize Pecan Co., San Antonio, Texas; (210)-679-7165
 Mr. Wes Rice, Ponca City, Oklahoma; (580)-767-1195
 Mr. Fred Stockbauer, Austin, Texas (512) 573-9992

Pecan Nurseries which may have trees listed in Table 2.

Underwood Pecan Nursery, Foley, AL; (334) 943-8056
 Dellwood Pecan Tree Nursery, Foley, AL; (334) 943-8693
 Clint Mayo, Grand Bay, AL (334) 865-4126

Standard Cultivar Descriptions and Notes

Candy (MS Seedling) This cultivar is very prolific, bearing large clusters of small nuts. The nut has a hard shell, but flavor is excellent. Shuck split occurs very early (Sept. 25), and bird depredation can be a major problem. Budbreak is very early and may freeze in north AL regions.

Curtis (FL Seedling) An old disease resistant cultivar that produces good crops as a mature tree. The nut is small and ripens late, but has good cracking and storing qualities. Tree form is open and upright, good for home landscapes.

Elliott (FL Seedling) Despite small nut size, market acceptance for this cultivar continues to grow, because kernel color and taste is outstanding. It is slow to begin bearing. Scab resistance is excellent, but yellow aphids and scorch mites can be severe. Budbreak is very early and may freeze in north AL regions. Nuts ripen in early October.

Farley (FL Seedling) Good quality, medium to small, blocky-shaped nut. Shells easily and has excellent, hickory nut flavor. Ripens very late and is susceptible to birds and rodent predators. Production is low to moderate, but consistent. Scab could be a problem in very wet years.

Gloria Grande (SC Seedling) This cultivar has excellent scab resistance; however, black aphids can be severe. The nut is large and resembles Stuart, but ripens very late and is mediocre in kernel quality. Kernel quality has been very poor in Baldwin County, and this cultivar should be avoided by Gulf Coast growers.

Owens (MS Seedling) Owens is the only protandrous cultivar in Table 1. Its early pollen shed makes it a good pollinizer for many cultivars. It bears medium to large nuts, with thick shells. Kernel quality is generally good, but it tends to produce excessive crops in some years with low quality. Scab could be a problem in very wet years.

