



# Selection and Care of Pecan Varieties for Louisiana Yards

The pecan tree is prevalent in Louisiana as a shade tree in the landscape and also as a source of nuts for home use. However, many plantings do not produce because of poor variety or poor site selection.

When selecting a pecan variety for home planting, the most important factor to consider is disease tolerance or resistance. Homeowners normally do not have access to high-pressure spray equipment, a requirement for season-long disease control on large trees. Smaller trees may be sprayed for the first few years with small hydraulic sprayers. No sprays are required before the tree produces pecans.

The recommended varieties for home planting are listed and described below. These varieties are available from commercial nurseries and have proved to be the best ones to plant for Louisiana growing conditions. Cross-pollination improves the quality and quantity of nuts produced. Unless other pecan plantings are within a 1/4-mile radius, two varieties with opposite blooming characteristics should be planted for cross-pollination. These are referred to as early pollen shedding and late pollen shedding types.

## Recommended Varieties

### Late Pollen Shedding

**Candy** - Medium-sized nuts (67 nuts/lb.) with medium-thick shells and 46% kernels, which are attractive with high quality and good flavor. Trees are vigorous with dense, dark green foliage, ripen early and bear in four to five years. It has moderate scab resistance, and the tree has strong framework. It tends to bear in alternate years as trees grow older.

**Elliott** - Round nut, medium-sized (67 nuts/lb.) with a 53% kernel. Shell is thin and has excellent cracking characteristics and a bright, well-flavored kernel. This tree has excellent resistance to scab. It bears in six to eight years. It has been widely planted in south Louisiana. It is susceptible to bunch disease.

**Sumner** - Trees produce medium-large (46 nuts/lb.) attractive nuts of good quality and a 56% kernel. The kernel has a good light color. Trees bear at a relatively

early age, five to six years. It is recommended for yard plantings because of excellent scab resistance.

**Melrose** - It is a prolific producer of medium to large oblong nuts (54 nuts/lb.) with excellent cracking qualities, high shelling percentage and bright, attractive kernels with 55% kernel. It bears in six to eight years. It has moderate resistance to scab and shuck disease. It is susceptible to powdery mildew and bunch disease.

### Early Pollen Shedding

**Houma** - It is a prolific producer of medium to large nuts (55 nuts/lb.). The bright attractive kernels have a 51% shelling percentage. It has good to moderate scab resistance. Trees are susceptible to downy spot and early fall freezes.

**Oconee** - It is a good producer of large, thin-shelled oblong nuts (48 nuts/lb.) with excellent cracking qualities. The nuts have a shelling percentage of 54% kernels, which are very attractive. It has moderate scab resistance.

**Caddo** - It is a prolific producer of thin-shelled medium size nuts (64 nuts/lb.), which are shaped like footballs, with points at both ends. The nut is an excellent cracker, which produces a shelling percentage of 56% bright attractive kernels. It has moderate scab resistance and good bunch disease resistance; however, it is susceptible to black aphids, powdery mildew and fungal leaf scorch.

Varieties highly susceptible to diseases should be avoided. Schley, Wichita and Desirable are highly susceptible to scab and should not be planted because of their need to be sprayed.

## Transplanting Hints for Homeowners

Plant intermediate-sized trees 4-5 feet in height. Larger trees normally suffer more from transplanting shock and do not grow off as well as smaller trees. Purchase trees from a reputable, established nursery. Several sell trees of the varieties recommended for Louisiana. Container-grown trees have a better chance of survival and grow faster initially than bare-rooted trees.

Never allow the roots of the trees to dry out before planting. Heel the trees in, and keep the roots moist until ready to plant.

Dig a hole large enough to accommodate the root system. Plant the tree at the same depth previously grown, except that container trees should be planted one inch deeper. Prune badly damaged and dead roots from the trees at time of planting and cut the top back one-third to one-half on bare-rooted trees.

Start pruning and training young trees immediately. Do not allow forks with weak crotches to develop; only one scaffold branch should be allowed to develop from each place on the main trunk.

Water trees immediately after planting and weekly thereafter. This is especially important during the first year after planting. Avoid overwatering in heavy, poorly drained soils. Water the second year during dry weather (three weeks or more without rain).

Keep competing vegetation to a minimum. Use mulches to hold down weed growth and to conserve moisture except on soils with poor internal drainage.

Do not dry-fertilize transplanted trees during the first year; the tree may get root burn from the fertilizer. Allow the young tree to establish its root system before applying fertilizers. Half-strength liquid fertilizers may be used once or twice in late May and mid to late June in poorer soils, provided watering is continued.

## Pruning Instructions

When planting, you will have better success with your trees if you prune all side branches to within 6 inches of the main trunk of the tree. Then prune one-third off the main trunk of the tree. It may be necessary to cut lower than where branches begin.

## Guide to Proper Planting and Care

Dig hole larger than root spread if bare root or if container grown.

If balled and in burlap, remove plastic cover if any, but not the burlap.

If in metal, fiber or plastic container, remove container before planting. If plants are root bound, open root

ball slightly. Cut the taproot at the bottom of the container if it circles to bottom of the pot.

Firm soil in bottom of hole to avoid settling. Then set earth ball into ground so that top of ball is slightly below ground level.

Fill hole with good topsoil. Mix one-fourth to one-third part organic matter with soil to hold moisture.

Firm soil around plant to eliminate air pockets.

Soak thoroughly with water. Thereafter, water thoroughly once a week, increasing time gradually to 10 to 14 days.

Keep soil cultivated around plant, and remove competing vegetation.

For additional information, contact your county agent, extension specialist or the LSU Pecan Research and Extension Station personnel in Shreveport.



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