

SOUTHEAST GEORGIA PECAN PRESS

*The Official Newsletter of the UGA Cooperative Extension
Pecan Agent Cohort*



Montgomery County

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ZINC MANAGEMENT AT VOVRC

By Andrew Sawyer, Area Pecan Agent

The zinc recommendation is **1 - 3 lbs per tree for the first four years**. I am observing orchards ages 5 to 10 years with zinc deficiency and want to share our first leaf tissue samples taken at the Vidalia Onion & Vegetable Research Center concerning zinc. These trees just completed their 5th leaf. After planting, I followed the young tree fertilizer program applying 10-10-10 at recommended rates for the first four years. **I applied zinc separate as zinc sulfate at 36% zinc at 2 lbs per tree for the first three years only.** I took these samples in July (Table 1).

Zinc leaf tissue sufficiency range is between 50 - 100 parts per million (ppm), which means these trees have sufficient zinc. My point is to share that *this has come from just three years of 2 lbs zinc per tree with no foliar sprays*. Granular zinc is costly but it is effective. We need to understand the build up of zinc over time and how it is taken up inside the tree. We think of zinc as all going into the leaf, but the tree roots actually take up zinc as well. If the tree has to choose which method of uptake, it will end up deficient in zinc.

Leaf Tissue Sample	Zinc (ppm)
Avalon	143
Excel	151
Lakota	116

**Table 1. 2025 leaf tissue zinc from low-input pecan trial
at the Vidalia Onion & Vegetable Research Center**

I believe our zinc issues originate in understanding of the need for root uptake, how zinc competes with other nutrients, short-term vs. long-term zinc applications, in the soil and the need for zinc to build up over time. I plan on covering this in the next Pecan Grower issue.

EAST GEORGIA PECAN HARVEST

By Andrew Sawyer, Area Pecan Agent

In one way the 2025 pecan crop in East Georgia did what it was supposed to. After predicting little to no crop, pecans across East Georgia presented a large flower crop this spring. After June, it was clear that a decent crop was set. This gave us hope. Many, however, still remained cautious due to unknown effects from Hurricane Helene.

During the summer, we had to increase our inputs to control scab. Controlling this pathogen is made more complex by the frequency of rain as opposed to the amount of rain. For at least a month, we could not get a 24-hour period of dry time for these fungicides to move into the leaf. Our contact compounds (Dodine and Tin) suffer the most from rain frequency. By August, scab was obvious but the crop was still there.

It appeared we had a similar crop to 2024 before Hurricane Helene. By this time, we noticed scab affecting 'Pawnee' worse than 'Desirable.' As the rain quit, the heat remained. The first to be affected by dry weather was 'Pawnee', as shucks were struggling to open. This was specific to the timing of the dry weather - drought after kernel fill (Figure 1).

As harvest began, Laurens County and the western edge of our region showed more positive numbers in yield and quality (Figure 2). As I moved toward Washington and Jefferson Counties, I noticed more issues with the earlier varieties compared to later. As I traveled south through Appling, Montgomery, Toombs, Tattnall, and Wayne counties, I could see the small 'Pawnee' was very consistent. I also noticed 'Caddo', 'Cape Fear', and 'Excel' were holding some quality compared to others. In Tattnall County, reports of 'Desirable' were better than 'Oconee'. Ware and Pierce counties did not set the crop I saw elsewhere, which helped reduce their inputs for the season.

By Thanksgiving, most of the crop was much shorter than it first appeared. Growers noted full wagons weighed much less than normal. Some growers reported as low as 20% and 30% of a crop. This I particularly noticed through the mid corridor of East Georgia, which supports the effect of Hurricane Helene damage. In regions outside of Helene damage, the drought from August through November was very significant to the development of the kernels. A final consideration is effects of our cloudy days during nut size, restricting early kernel development due to less photosynthesis.

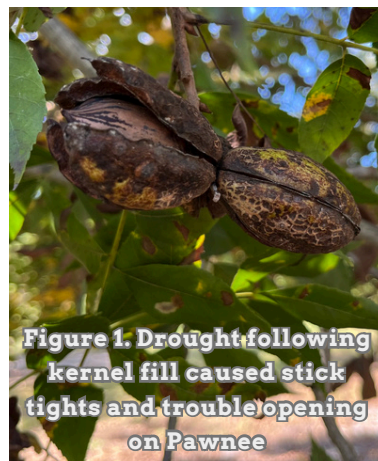


Figure 1. Drought following kernel fill caused stick tights and trouble opening on Pawnee

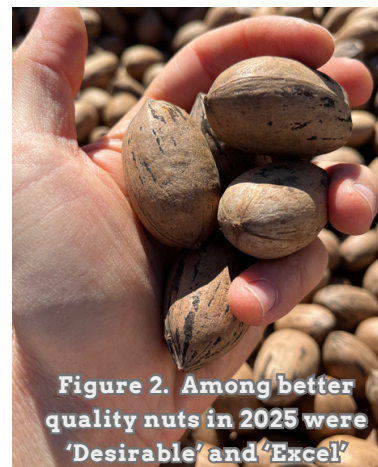


Figure 2. Among better quality nuts in 2025 were 'Desirable' and 'Excel'



Figure 4. Montgomery County Agent Lauren Stanley discusses Hurricane Helene impacts one year after on Farm Monitor. (Photo by Moses Pecan)



Figure 5. Shelled pecans show waffers and lower quality in lighter loads than expected



Figure 6. Dark veins on Lakota indicate water stress and/or heavy crop load in Oconee County

PECANS IN THE HOME LANDSCAPE

By Josh Fuder, Cherokee County Ag Agent

Growth and development have reshaped much of the state, particularly here in Cherokee County. While the visual changes to the landscape are easy to recognize, a more subtle shift has occurred in how home landscapes are valued and designed. Up until a generation ago, fruit and nut trees were standard even on city-scale lots. There is increasing interest in landscapes that serve functions beyond aesthetics, such as incorporating native plants, habitat creation and food production. This is where the pecan deserves more attention in our modern landscape. The stately size and high, open shade of a mature pecan are attributes that allow it to be integrated into a designed landscape and home orchard alike.

Location and spacing of trees are important factors when planting pecans in the home landscape (Figure 6). Trees should be planted in a full sun location well away from structures, as well as overhead and belowground utilities with a minimum clearance of 60 to 75 feet. Ideal spacing in a home planting would be 30-100' between pollinating partners. Pollination is the second, and more complex selection factor. Pollinators should be placed no more than 150' from main variety. From the backyard perspective, you need one pollinator for up to 8 trees. Cultivars will be categorized based on timing of pollen shed from the separate male flowers and maturation of female flowers. *Type 1 cultivars shed pollen from the male flowers before the female, while a Type 2 tree sees the females mature before the male flowers shed their pollen.* Table 2 provides best pollinators for each variety.

Cultivar selection is a critical component and has a few factors to consider. Disease susceptibility varies greatly in cultivar,s so a home planting should select varieties with high resistance to scab. (Table 2)

Pecans will bear nuts around seven years after planting. For these trees to produce pecans, they will need water. Depending on water availability, this will be our most limiting factor. Though pecan irrigation is simple to establish - drip lines six feet off the trees - water requirements are higher than a standard home well irrigation pump. Water timing is another factor. Since water is most important for kernel development, any water they receive from August through mid-October is best. Once bearing, water trees 2 - 4 hours (more if possible) each night through this period. Early rainfall aids in nut set and early nut growth.

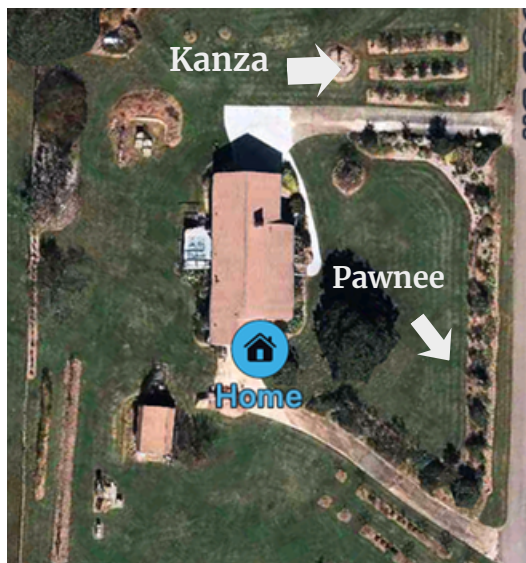


Figure 6. The front landscape has a mixture of ornamental and fruit/nut trees. The surrounding plantings will change as pecans mature.

Cultivar	% Kernel	Nuts /lb	Harvest Date	Pollinators
Avalon	55	57	Mid-October	Creek, Oconee, Tom, Whiddon
Excel	50	45	Mid-October	Elliot, Kanza, Lakota, McMillan
Elliot	51	77	Mid-October	Caddo, Creek
Kanza	51	68	Early-October	Caddo, Oconee, Tom
McMillan	51	52	Mid-October	Caddo, Creek, Oconee

Table 2. Pecan varieties for home and backyard.

AROUND THE DISTRICT



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UGA is An Equal Opportunity Institution.

Upcoming Events

February 20 - 21, 2026 - **Southeastern Pecan Grower's Association Conference** - Gulf Shores, AL

February 28, 2026 - **North Carolina Pecan Grower's Association Meeting**



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