



Agricultural Experiment Station  
Pecan Research-Extension Station  
10300 Harts Island Road (71115)  
Post Office Box 5519  
Shreveport, Louisiana 71135-5519  
(318)797-8034  
Fax: (318)676-7371  
Web Site: [www.lsuagcenter.com](http://www.lsuagcenter.com)



# IN A NUTSHELL

Newsletter

EXTENSION PROGRAMS  
Agriculture and Forestry  
Community Leadership  
Economic Development  
Environmental Sciences  
Family and Consumer Sciences  
4-H Youth Development  
Natural Resources

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Number 4

## LOUISIAN PECAN CROP

Early reports indicate that Louisiana could have a large pecan crop this year. Several orchards that reported good crops last year are reporting early signs of a good crop this year. Most orchards reporting light bloom had very heavy crops last year.

Hurricanes Katrina and Rita appear to not have reduced the return pecan crop as much as expected. Some orchards with broken limbs, downed trees, and stripped foliage appear to be producing surprisingly good nut crops this year.

Most of Louisiana has been very dry during the winter and spring. A short period of rainfall occurred during pollination period which may affect nut pollination.

## MISSISSIPPI PECAN CROP

Mississippi has reported an excellent bloom in the northwest area. Heavy rains did occur in the area during pollination which could affect nut set. There has been one report of nutlets shedding. Central Mississippi appears to have a moderate crop.

## PHYLLOXERA

This has been a bad year for phylloxera in Louisiana and Mississippi. Phylloxera has been widespread and has shown up in new areas. Some of the growers have been having control difficulties. It appears that phylloxera crawlers have had an extended emergence this year. There have been reports of unusually high numbers of galls on nutlets this year.

Phylloxera emerging from the galls do not feed and produce no damage. Phylloxera control is best in the spring shortly after budbreak.

## **FERTILIZATION**

Growers using split fertilizer applications in their pecan orchards should consider their second fertilizer application in late May or early June. The second application should be made if a heavy nut crop is present, but can be omitted if the nut crop is light.

## **LEAF SAMPLING**

A leaf sample is far more accurate than a soil sample in determining the amount of essential minerals being absorbed from the soil. A leaf sample will indicate the level of soil-supplied minerals and is the best means of accurately establishing the nitrogen and zinc levels. These two minerals, in addition to potassium, are the three elements most often deficient in Louisiana pecan orchards.

Leaf samples are extremely useful when properly taken. For trees that are producing well, a leaf sample can detect deficiencies in the non-visible range often referred to as “hidden hunger”. Corrective action can then be taken before the appearance of visual deficiency symptoms and in time to avoid an adverse effect on production.

Soil sampling is still recommended to determine soil texture, certain mineral levels or imbalances, soil pH and any toxic mineral levels. It is also the only means available to determine fertility needs in new plantings. Both methods should be used initially, although subsequent soil samples need not be taken as often as leaf samples.

Pecan leaf analysis should be made June 15 to July 15. Collect the middle pair of leaflets from the middle leaf of the current season’s growth. Take samples from shoots which have terminated their growth for the season and have fully expanded leaves. Continue this procedure until 40 pairs of leaflets have been collected from at least 10 trees. This constitutes one sample. Select shoots that are fully exposed to the sun and near the ends of branches, not small branches arising from large limbs nor shaded branches near the center of the tree. Collect from all sides of the trees. Avoid taking leaflets damaged by insects, diseases or those that are otherwise contaminated. Leaflets in one sample should all be from one variety, but this is not essential.

Take separate samples from different soil types or fertility management areas. Samples from trees that are dying or otherwise not typical of the average orchard tree should not be included with the regular samples. It is also advisable to keep samples from young non-bearing trees labeled separately from samples of older bearing trees. Avoid sampling leaves covered with dust such as those that occur near dirt roads, etc.

Place the leaves in a new clean paper bag for air-drying in a dust-free area. Leave the bags open until leaves are dry. Leaves can also be dried in a kitchen oven overnight with the oven set on warm. Do not send in fresh green leaves.

If major rains have not followed last zinc application rinse the leaves in running water and wipe with damp cloth.

Avoid rubber and galvanized containers when collecting leaves since these could affect results.

There are a number of private and public plant analysis laboratories that growers can use to analyze their leaves. The nutrients normally analyzed are: Nitrogen, Phosphorus, Potassium, Magnesium, Calcium, Sulfur, Zinc, Iron, Manganese, Boron, Copper and Molybdenum

Mailing address of

University Laboratories:

Plant Analysis Laboratory  
LSU Department of Agronomy  
127 Sturgis Hall  
Baton Rouge, LA 70803-2111  
(225) 578-1219  
<http://www.lsuagcenter.com/stpal/>

Agriculture Chemistry Laboratory  
Agricultural Chemistry Building  
LSU Campus Highland Rd.  
Baton Rouge, LA 70803  
(225)342-5812

MSU Soil Testing & Plant Analysis Laboratory  
Box 9610  
Mississippi State, MS 39762  
(662)325-3313

Samples can be sent directly to the laboratory and the results of the nutrient analysis will be returned directly to the grower with an adequate, deficient, or excessive rating given to each nutrient. If you have questions on the results you can contact your County Agent.

### **JUNE DROP**

The June drop occurs mid June through early July. The drop occurs just as the nutlets start to rapidly increase in size. The size of the drop varies in severity from year to year.

The three primary causes of the June drop are inadequate pollination, nut curculio damage, and hickory shuckworm damage.

Inadequate pollination is often weather related. This type of drop is usually most severe following long rainy periods during late April and early May. Pecans are pollinated by wind borne pollen. The rains prevent pollination by removing much of the pollen from the air. Nutlets that drop from lack of pollination usually show no signs of injury. The pollination drop is expected to be light to moderate this year since there has been dry weather during most of the pecan pollination period.

Nut curculio can also cause severe nutlet drop. There is usually a tobacco looking stain near a small puncture injury on the nutlet. The white legless worm can sometimes be found by cutting into the nutlet. Sometimes they are so small that it is hard to find them.

Hickory shuckworm can also be a major cause of nutlet drop. There is often a whitish blotch around the puncture of the shuckworm. The whitish area is sometimes not seen. This is especially true after rainy periods. These white worms can sometimes be found by cutting into the nutlets. Shuckworm larvae differ from curculio larvae in that they have legs.

Damage from shuckworm is often more severe in areas where pecan phylloxera have been a problem. The first generation of shuckworm feed inside phylloxera galls which helps build up their population for the second generation which is a factor in the June drop. High levels of infestations of shuckworms were observed in galls in several orchards in Northeast Louisiana.

The second generation of nut casebearer normally appears the same time as the nut curculio and hickory shuckworm. The second generation casebearer is usually not as destructive as the first, however, it can sometimes cause considerable damage.

Insecticide applications are generally made the third or fourth week in June and two weeks later to control severe curculio, casebearer and shuckworm infestations. Growers may only use one spray or none if they have a heavy nut crop and have not had severe problems with these insects in recent years. The insecticides Imidan 70 W at 2.0-3.0 lbs/acre, Warrior at 2.56 -5/12 fl. ozs/acre or Lorsban 4E at 1.5-2.0 pts/acre should give good control.

The June drop can be helpful in thinning nuts in years when pecan trees are overloaded. The thinning will improve nut quality during overloaded years and can also help reduce alternate bearing by evening out the high and low production years. The June drop can also be a disaster when excessive nut drop occurs in a light year.

### **HURRICANE ASSISTANCE**

United States Department of Agriculture has approved four hurricane assistance programs. The Tree Indemnity Program (TIP) is the program that will best fit pecan growers. Growers incurring costs of at least \$90 per acre for replanting, rehabilitation, cleanup, or debris removal in commercial fruit and nut producing orchards in designated parishes and counties are eligible. All counties and parishes in Louisiana and Mississippi have been designated. Parishes will be ranked in four tiers based on wind speeds for payment levels.

Sign up for the hurricane assistance programs began on May 17. Growers that think they might qualify should contact their local USDA Farm Service Agency office. A final date for sign up has not been set at this time.

## **UPCOMING EVENTS**

### **June 15 – 16: Louisiana Pecan Growers Association 2006 Annual Conference and Trade Show.**

June 15 – Starts 1:00 p.m. at Pecan Research-Extension Station, 10300 Harts Island Road, Shreveport, LA. The program includes a tour of the Pecan Station and comments about research being done; Pecan Herbicide Evaluation and Equipment Display and Demonstration.

June 16 – Starts 8:00 a.m. at Clarion Hotel, Shreveport, LA. Topics include: Bacterial Leaf Scorch; Sprayer Calibration; Worker Protection; Insurance Issues Affecting Farmers; Pecan Research-Extension Station Website and a Roundtable “Sharing of ideas of what does/does not work in other parts of the Southeastern United States and why it will/will not work in North/South Louisiana”. The first three topics are required for pesticide recertification.

For additional information contact Susan Wilson at (318)932-8912.

**June 29: Seminar “Establishing a Pecan Orchard”.** 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m., Bill Beasley’s pecan orchard at 10123 Hwy 84, Ferriday, LA. This is a free pre-conference seminar presented by Charlie Graham and John Pyzner from the Pecan Research-Extension Station. The seminar will cover site selection, orchard design, variety selection, planting and orchard maintenance. Beasley’s orchard is located 4 miles west on Hwy 84 from Ferriday, or 12 miles east of Jonesville on Hwy 84. The orchard is located on north side of road.

For additional information contact John Pyzner (318)797-8034 or Bill Beasley (318)757-4307.

### **June 29 – 30: Pecan Producers of Louisiana & Mississippi Pecan Growers’ Association Convention and Trade Show.**

June 29 -- Starts 2:00 p.m. at Bill Beasley’s pecan orchard at 10123 Hwy 84, Ferriday. The program includes: “Wildlife Damage Management” presentation by Walter Cotton, USDA Wildlife Specialist; Pecan Equipment Display and Demonstrations; An Orchard and Nursery Tour with discussions on irrigation, tree thinning, leaf sampling and pest management by Pecan Scientist and Growers; and Supper on the Farm.

June 30 – Starts 8:00 a.m. at Comfort Suites in Vidalia, LA. Topics include: Worker Protection Standards; Pecan Bacterial Leaf Scorch; Calibration of Air-Blast Sprayers; and Pecan Water Management Without Irrigation. Attending all of these sessions are required for Louisiana Pesticide Recertification. Pecan Guesstimate by Ben Littlepage will follow a buffet lunch.

For additional information contact Stephen Norman (318)448-3139 office, (318)729-3173 cell or [rsipecans@aol.com](mailto:rsipecans@aol.com).

**August 3: Pecan Clinic.** 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m., Louisiana Baptist Children’s Home, 7200 Desiard St, Monroe, La. Topics presented by Pecan Research-Extension Station Personnel will include: Stinkbug and Shuckworm Control; Nut Thinning on Pecan Trees; Pecan Tree Thinning and Late Season Scab Control.

For additional information contact John Pyzner (318)797-8034 or [jpyzner@agcenter.lsu.edu](mailto:jpyzner@agcenter.lsu.edu).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John Pyzner". The signature is written in a cursive style. To the right of the signature is a vertical red line.

John Pyzner,  
Associate Professor, Pecan-Fruit Extension Specialist  
LSU Ag Center  
Pecan Research-Extension Station  
[jpyzner@agcenter.lsu.edu](mailto:jpyzner@agcenter.lsu.edu)

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