

# **PECAN MANAGEMENT CALENDAR FOR TEXAS**

Drs. George Ray McEachern & Larry A. Stein, Extension Horticulturists

**(Note: Though much of this pertains to commercial pecan orchards, the time lines are valid for the home orchard or for only a tree or two in your landscape.)**

## **January**

1. Complete harvest for nuts missed in December
2. Shred orchard floor to remove winter weeds
3. Prepare books for cost analysis for last year and this year's plans
4. Attend the Texas Pecan Orchard Management Short Course at College Station
5. If rains occur, evaluate soil drainage and surface runoff to avoid saturation
6. Clean and store harvest equipment
7. Heel-in and plant new nursery trees
8. Remove crowded trees as lower limbs touch
9. Remove low-hanging and broken limbs

## **February**

1. Service tractors, sprayers, irrigation system
2. Continue to remove crowded trees
3. Collect and store graft wood
4. Repair fences, gates, bridges, and roads

## **March**

1. Spray herbicide strip down tree row
2. Shred row middles if needed
3. Check out irrigation system
4. Check with chemical dealers for products available and costs

## **April**

1. Purchase casebearer pheromone traps
2. Spray zinc three times, beginning at bud break and every seven days
3. Fertilize at 50-pounds-N-per-acre rate to mature trees
4. Begin irrigation weekly if no rains occur
5. Begin grafting when new growth starts and bark slips easily

## **May**

1. Monitor 100 clusters daily for the number of casebearer moths, eggs, worms, and entries
2. Record and plot all casebearer counts to determine if a spray is needed
3. Determine crop size by counting the number of clusters per 10 shoots; 3 of 10 is low, 5 of 10 is good, and when 7 of 10 terminals have pecans, it is a heavy crop
4. Fertilize second time with 50 pounds of N per acre down the bandwidth
5. Spray fourth zinc application two weeks after the third
6. If needed, spray for casebearer at threshold that allows complete orchard coverage at peak insecticide effectiveness
7. If needed, spray a second casebearer application if emergence was extended and large
8. A fungicide may be needed if rains have occurred
9. Continue irrigation weekly according to soil water-holding capacity and tree use; avoid soil saturation by using short cycles
10. Spray herbicide strip second time down tree row when weeds are 10 inches tall
11. Shred row middles when grass and weeds are 10 inches tall
12. Continue grafting as long as bark slips

## **June**

1. Spray fifth zinc application, three weeks after the fourth
2. Scout for second-generation casebearer, and spray insecticide only if needed
3. Fertilize with 50 pounds of N per acre if a good or heavy crop is set
4. Continue irrigation, but avoid soil saturation
5. Do not spray aphids
6. A fungicide may be needed if rains have occurred

## **July**

1. Fertilize with 25 pounds of N per acre if a good or heavy crop exists
2. Trunk-shake trees with a good or heavy crop to thin nuts and reduce over-cropping stress
3. Continue irrigation to avoid water stage drop
4. Spray herbicide strip down tree row for third time if grass or broadleaf weeds exist
5. Collect leaf samples for lab analysis, nutrient level, and fertilizer needs for next year
6. Attend Texas Pecan Growers Association conference
7. A fungicide may be needed if rains have occurred

## **August**

1. Fertilize with 25 pounds of N per acre only if a good or heavy crop exists
2. Continue irrigation for kernel filling and stress reduction, but do not saturate soil
3. Remove cattle from orchards
4. Monitor shuckworm, stinkbug, and black aphid; spray only if needed
5. Place weevil traps under trees, and spray following major emergence
6. Check out harvest equipment
7. Begin preparation for harvest; remove sticks and limbs from orchard floor

## **September**

1. Continue irrigation for kernel filling and stress reduction, but do not saturate soil
2. Continue to monitor weevil emergence; a second spray may be needed
3. Check out crow control equipment
4. Estimate crop, and inform buyers of the varieties, volume, and quality of nuts for sale
5. Check out crackers and shellers if kernels are to be sold at the orchard
6. Contact potential retail sales outlets

## **October**

1. Continue irrigation until shuck split
2. Shred and drag under trees to remove holes in soil, in preparation for harvest
3. Rake limbs in preparation for harvest
4. Harvest nuts as soon as shucks begin to open
5. Clean sticks, pops, and dirt balls out of pecans
6. Dry pecans to less than 6% moisture
7. Collect 40 nut samples of each variety for entering in county pecan shows
8. Identify trees by variety, and mark or map for future use
9. Fight crows, squirrels, raccoons, turkeys, and other animal thefts
10. Make detailed notes on leaf and shuck disorders by variety, location, and severity

## **November**

1. Continue harvest, cleaning and drying as fast as possible
2. Measure nut size, percent kernel, color, and freedom from flaws to provide pecan buyers an opportunity to pay highest possible price for each variety for sale

3. Contact several buyers to obtain best price
4. Winterize engines, sprayer pumps, irrigation equipment, to prevent freeze injury
5. Continue to fight crows
6. Take every precaution to prevent the theft of nuts in the orchard and after harvest

### **December**

1. Complete harvest by December 7 to meet holiday market and obtain best possible price
2. Visit regional pecan shows to learn variety characteristics and this year's performance
3. Bake the best holiday candies, pies and cakes with your fresh pecans