



*From your friends at Savage Equipment*

## On the Calendar

### Jul 30-Aug 2:

Texas Pecan Growers Conference;  
Embassy Suites, Denton, TX

### Aug 24-25:

Arizona Pecan Growers Conference;  
Hilton Double Tree, Tucson, AZ

### Sep 6-8:

Dia Del Nogalero; Delicias, Chihuahua,  
MX; diadelnogalero.mx for info

### Sep 8:

Georgia Pecan Growers Fall Field Day; U.  
of GA Ponder Farm; georgiapecan.org

### Sep 13-14:

National Pecan Shellers Annual Mtg.  
Royal Sonesta Hotel, Austin, TX

## Texas Pecan Growers Conference: New city, new venue, new equipment.

The folks here at Savage Equipment are looking forward to a rendezvous with our pecan community at the Texas Pecan Growers Conference and Show, which takes place in a new location in 2023. The Embassy Suites Convention Center in Denton, Texas will host this year's event from July 30 through August 2nd. This venue is not only new to the pecan growers, it's also newly constructed. We

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Texas Pecan Growers Conference, 2022

## The unlikely journey of pecan-farmer and history-maker Donnie Cochran

Navy Captain, Donnie Cochran's unique journey from farm kid to elite Naval Aviator and back to farming is truly inspirational. His story begins on a farm in southwest Georgia where his parents "created their own labor force"—nine boys and three girls. They seldom needed a grocery store because they grew just about everything the grocer might offer: peanuts, corn, cotton, okra, peas, tomatoes, potatoes—you get the idea. The family also raised livestock and poultry of several kinds. Captain Cochran credits the training his parents supplied and the hard-earned skills acquired on their farm for much of his success at what came next.

The sky above the Cochran's farm happened to be a busy flyway, frequented by a vast array of military aircraft from all the services. As young Donnie sweated through rows of peas and okra, his attention was often drawn skyward for a glimpse of the high-speed parade of Army,

Navy, Air Force and Marine air machines. The seed of an idea entered his young brain. Gradually, the far-fetched goal of becoming a military aviator emerged. And, since those Navy guys got to fly from a carrier, it would be all the more thrilling. Captain Cochran's dream, energized by years of dedication and perseverance, came to fruition in 1978 when he earned his Naval aviator "wings of gold". His first operational tour of duty was Naval Air Station Miramar, which happened to be where the Navy's elite flying demonstration team, The Blue Angels, trained for their public displays around the world. Again, an idea took root, and an exceptionally ambitious goal was born. After several years of

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**1986 Blue Angels Aerial Demonstration Team**

proving himself in the demanding arena of carrier-based fighter aviation, Cochran would make his bid to join the Blue Angels team. He was denied. Undeterred, he decided to give it another go the following year when he would make Blue Angel history as a selectee for the 1986 team, the first African American to be chosen for this premier unit. A normal tour of duty with the Blue Angels is two years, but Captain Cochran ended up with them for three years as the team transitioned from the A-4 Skyhawk to the F/A-18 Hornet in 1987. After returning to the operational Navy and eventually serving with distinction as commander of Fighter Squadron VF-111, he interviewed for the “Boss” position with the Blue Angels. He was selected from five other candidates and again, broke new ground for black aviators as Blue Angels Flight leader.

Following his Navy career and subsequent years working in business aviation and team development, Captain

Cochran’s current mission in life is giving back to his country. He does this by working to make a meaningful difference in the lives of the people he meets and helping to build more effective organizations and better leaders. His company, Enhance Performance Consulting, Inc., keeps him traveling around the country, consulting with a variety of groups. He also speaks frequently to audiences in the business, education, and law enforcement communities. Captain Cochran motivates them to create stronger organizations through leadership, teamwork, individual accountability and character.

His other current mission involves a return to his agricultural roots. A few years ago, Captain Cochran decided to create a pecan orchard on part of the land that’s been in his family for over a hundred years. He told us that he wanted to build a legacy and provide a means of income for his children, grandchildren and generations to come. His trees are just beginning to produce, and Cochran is working to assemble his equipment inventory with a Savage harvester, shaker, blower, cracker and sheller. He told us how he appreciated the attention Savage Equipment gives to smaller operators and how the folks at Savage of Georgia have been helpful with advice for those getting started in the business.

If you would like to learn more about Captain Cochran and how he achieved seemingly impossible success for a farm kid from rural Georgia, you might check out his book, Glad to Be Here—My Lessons Learned as a Blue Angels Flight Leader and Pilot. This self-help guide is filled with strategies to help people define their dreams and develop the tools and methods to achieve them.

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## **Busy Savage engineering office gets a couple of new recruits.**

In June, Savage Equipment welcomed two recent Oklahoma State University graduates to the team: Mark Dodson of Richardson, Texas and Cameron Ayers of Oklahoma City. They were almost like a package deal. They met in the engineering dorm their freshman year at OSU and are now splitting rent on a house on nearby Lake Texoma. It’s no surprise, they both enjoy boating, jet-skiing and most things lake related. They’re already working on new Savage machines, and the engineering crew couldn’t be more pleased to have their help.



**Mark Dodson (L) and Cameron Ayers (R)**





## TPGA Pecan Conference (continued from pg. 1)

can all enjoy more time to hang out and learn from each other over the extensive breakfasts and evening receptions, which are included with our room reservations.

The TPGA will once again be offering the opportunity for folks to participate in the “Pecan Pairing Program”. The TPGA announcement looks like this.

We will host our annual Pecan Pairing Program on Sunday at 5 p.m. before the Grand Opening Reception. This program is designed to bring growers from the same region together so that they have someone to turn to when the going gets tough. As such a large state, Texas has a diverse range of growing conditions and practices. By participating in the Pecan Pairing Program, you’ll meet someone who is confronting the same challenges as you for a chance to talk, share ideas, and establish connections.

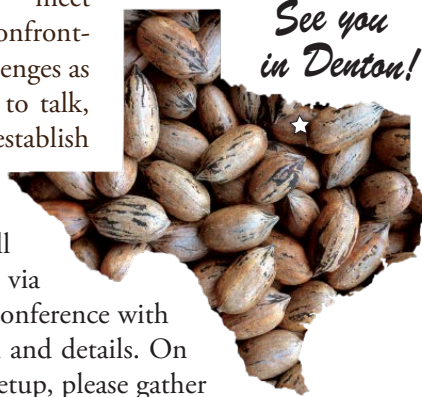
Once you’re signed up, you will be contacted via email before the conference with more information and details. On the day of the meetup, please gather near the registration desk.

If you’d like to be involved, you can sign up on the TPGA website, [tpga.org](http://tpga.org). Just scroll down the “Events” page.

For most folks, the festivities begin at 6:00 Sunday evening with the Grand Opening Reception. This event includes hors d’oeuvres and a fund-raising raffle drawing for a cool-looking, customized Henry .22 rifle. Starting Monday morning, a wealth of pecan-related education will be available, including the “Mini Pecan Short Course, sponsored by Texas A&M AgriLife Extension. The educational program will continue through Tuesday afternoon.

The orchard tour will take place Wednesday morning at the Raptor Ag orchards near Marietta, OK. It’s about an hour’s drive north of the conference center, but the opportunity to learn more about this unique, high-density pecan farm and a delicious lunch might make it worth the time and effort. There will be buses available from the conference center.

Don’t miss this opportunity to come meet with us in Texas this summer.



## News you can use!

Here’s a sampling of pecan-related news available on the internet and in some of our favorite pecan publications.

### Do you have the entrepreneurial stuff to win over the AgSharks?

Since 2017, the Western Growers organization has hosted the AgSharks Competition. This event is loosely based on the Shark Tank TV show and is designed “to identify key innovations in the fresh produce industry and support AgTech startups in bringing their technology to market.”

In this year’s competition, there will be three finalists selected which will receive the following.

- Potential to raise \$250,000+ in capital\*
- Present their solution to a room of 300+ growers and industry decision makers at the Western Growers Annual Meeting
- Potential access to farm acreage to pilot their technologies
- \$500 travel reimbursement for AgSharks finalists
- Complimentary conference registration to Western Growers Annual Meeting (1 person), hotel accommodations at host hotel (2 nights)

To learn more about this competition and the interesting things previous winners have done, go to the AgSharks website, [2023agsharks.splashthat.com](http://2023agsharks.splashthat.com). Applications close after July 28, but then there’s always next year.

### Northwestern Argentina creates its own path in the pecan industry.

In the June issue of *Pecan South*, author Nadia Venticinque presents a deep dive into present-day pecan growing in Argentina. Venticinque is a journalist and “the technical facilitator for competitive initiatives in Argentina’s Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries.” The article (High-Density Plantings—A New Look at Pecans in Argentina) focuses on high-density pecan growing that some farmers in the northwestern region of the country have implemented in the past decade or so.

As with most of the world outside of the U.S., the author speaks in hectares (about 2.5 acres) and meters (about 3.3 feet). Traditional planting in Argentina and many other regions would be 12 by 12 meters (39 by 39 feet) or 10 by 10 meters (33 by 33 feet) which works out

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### Argentina Pecan Industry (continued)

to 64 to 100 trees per hectare (26 to 40 trees per acre). For more than a decade, the growers featured in this article have been planting trees with much tighter spacing, from 7 by 10 meters (23 by 33 feet) down to 6 by 8 meters (20 by 26 feet). This works out to densities of 142 to 208 trees per hectare (57 to 84 trees per acre).

This approach to pecan growing is much more than an experiment in tree spacing. You might even call it a complete cultural shift. The longevity of pecan tree production is not a significant factor here; rather, the focus is on how quickly the trees can be brought into production and how abundant that production can be in the first decades. The intense management required in these orchards is more expensive in the first few years, but then tends to balance out so that the expense per unit of production is similar to conventional pecan farming.

Writing about one particular high-density farm of 25 hectares (62 acres), Venticinque describes the project's goal during a 30-year time frame:

The project's objectives were to start covering costs as soon as possible--achieved within years 6 through 7--recover the investment between years 10 and 12, and give the partners a horizon of profits that could be achieved in 25 years.

This extensive article is an interesting take on a very different kind of pecan production, and might prove educational for many growers.

### Alternate Bearing Considerations for the West

A June *Pecan South* article by the above name, written by Extension Pecan Specialist, Richard Heerema, makes for fascinating reading on this important subject. After an interesting discussion on how and why the alternate-bearing characteristic may have evolved in pecans and many other trees, Dr. Heerema delves into five factors that influence this undesirable characteristic.

The first thing to note is that tree genetics play a large role in alternate bearing tendency.

There is an "alternate bearing index" ranging from zero (equal yields each year) to one (absolute alternate bearing with no crop every other year) that can be used to quantify a particular cultivar's severity of alternate bearing.

"Westerns" show an alternate bearing index of 0.5 to 0.6 with "Wichita" being slightly higher. Heerema

observes that "Pawnees" are a bit worse than those two varieties and "Lakotas" have an even greater tendency toward alternate bearing.

Site selection also has an impact on alternate bearing. It seems that any factor that might trigger a severe crop loss might also initiate a sequence of more severe alternate bearing. Nutrient deficiencies, water shortages and other types of physiological stress can cause poor return bloom and start the cycle. Spring freezes and even hail storms can devastate production and trigger severe alternate bearing.

Sunlight management has a significant effect on alternate bearing. Several studies have demonstrated this. The alternate bearing index tends to fall substantially (improve) when mature trees are mechanically pruned to improve sunlight distribution.

In addition to those already mentioned, managing physiological stresses of all types tends to lessen the propensity for trees to alternate bear. These stresses include lack of water, salinity, aphids, diseases and more.

Lastly, Dr. Heerema discusses the use of nut thinning as a means to reduce alternate bearing as well as improve nut quality during "on" years. He believes this practice should be "strongly considered as a tool to bring back severely alternating orchards to a more moderate yield alternation pattern." Similar to fruit thinning, Heerema recommends that "mechanical pruning should be done most aggressively in the winter ahead of an "on" year.

### Arizona pecans continue to grow.

When folks think about the major pecan-growing states, Arizona would not normally be anywhere near the top of their list. It's time to rethink that. Hot, dry Arizona has been the number three state for pecan production for the past two years. In 2021 and 2022, Arizona had about 22,000 bearing acres of pecans to harvest. There are thousands more acres that will come into production in the next few years. Arizona pecan growers produced almost 41 million pounds in 2021 and 37 million in 2022.

It seems that, while nobody was looking, Arizona surpassed Texas in utilized production. Of course, it's also true that Texas has had a couple of tough years due to lingering drought conditions. There are still months to go before harvest, but it might be interesting to see how the "bronze medal" for pecan-production plays out for the 2023 crop year, now that Texas' drought conditions have subsided a bit.





## Need a cleaner harvest? You have options.

For decades, Savage Redline Cleaners and Pre-cleaners have been helping pecan growers bring a higher quality product to market. The good news is, when you decide you need one, there are plenty of options.

The 4324 Pre-cleaner takes the cleaned product aloft to deposit it directly into a trailer or other container. The Savage 4224 Cleaner is configured to allow for a more thorough cleaning on its integrated conveyor/inspection table.

Both machines use a multi-step process to maximize cleaning efficiency in a small amount of space. A clod remover takes out small rocks and dirt clods; a unique scuffing wheel eliminates most shuck material; and a powerful fan blows away the leaves and sticks. The product can be further hand-cleaned on



the conveyor table (on the 4224 Cleaner) or elevated into a trailer (on the 4324 Pre-cleaner).

You can order Savage Cleaners and Pre-cleaners with either an electric motor or a Kohler 20.5 HP gas engine.

Why transport and store trash with your valuable nut crop? Savage Cleaners and Pre-cleaners remove sticks, leaves and other trash quickly and efficiently. Cleaning nuts soon after harvest reduces the possibility of moisture damage to the harvested crop and gives you less to store. Cleaning your crop will also increase value and marketability.

If a Savage Cleaner or Pre-cleaner sounds like just the ticket for your pecan operation, you can see more of them on the Savage website, or just drop by any of our three locations.

## Expanding our commitment to service in the great Southwest

Savage Southwest, in Mesquite, New Mexico took a giant leap forward in their ability to serve customers in their region this past month. Not only do they now have a new highly qualified service technician, by the name of Steve Benavidez, they also recently acquired a shiny new service truck that makes service calls more responsive and more versatile.

Steve was born in Las Cruces and raised in nearby La Mesa, New Mexico. He studied automotive technology while attending High School and went on to complete his studies at Wyoming Technical Institute. Steve then adapted those technical skills and knowledge to the agricultural industry and continued to refined his craft in that line of work for over thirty years. He seems like the perfect guy to be supporting Savage Southwest and their customers in the region.

When Steve is not working on agricultural equipment, he enjoys fishing, boating and camping. He also appreciates a good ride through the beautiful landscapes of New Mexico on his motorcycle. He and wife, Patricia have four



children.

Now, both Savage of Georgia and Savage Southwest have dedicated service technicians. When the mission requires a “house call,” they also have the right vehicle to get them to the jobsite with the right tools.



## How about a nice cold glass of pecans?

You've probably seen the cow-milk substitutes coconut milk, oat milk and almond milk at the local store. One of the new kids on this block you might not have seen is pecan milk. That's right—there are a couple of entrepreneurs out there turning pecan meat and water (and a couple other ingredients) into a milk substitute. SPOILER ALERT: It doesn't taste like cow milk. However, it's still pretty good with your morning cereal, and the creamer version is supposed to be really good with coffee. It also makes for some tasty chocolate milk. One company is based in

central Texas and is called THIS PKN. The other one, Treehouse Naturals, is based in Georgia. Both of these companies are female owned and operated.



You could also try making your own. Soak a cup of pecans in water for a couple hours. Throw them in the blender with two cups of water and blend until smooth and creamy. Add two more cups of water along with a tablespoon of syrup or honey, a half teaspoon of vanilla extract and a couple dashes of salt. Blend again and enjoy (or refrigerate it for later). If it sits a while, you'll have to mix it up again.



### Chewy Coconut Pecan Granola Bars

Here's a great recipe for those summertime treks. We borrowed it from the [AmericanPecan.com](http://AmericanPecan.com) website. This delicious, nutritious vegetarian (and dairy free) treat was created by food blogger Andie Mitchell. Thanks, Andie!

#### INGREDIENTS

- 1/2 cup pecan pieces
- 2 cups old fashioned rolled oats
- 1 cup crispy rice cereal
- 1/2 cup dried cranberries
- 1/3 cup unsweetened coconut flakes
- 1/3 cup coconut oil
- 1/3 cup honey
- 1/4 cup light brown sugar, packed
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1/2 teaspoon salt

#### PROCESS

1. Preheat the oven to 325 degrees F. Line a 9-inch square baking pan with foil. Spray the foil with cooking oil spray.
2. In a large bowl, combine the pecan pieces, oats, cereal, cranberries, and coconut flakes.
3. In a small saucepan, heat the coconut oil, honey, brown sugar, vanilla, and salt over medium heat until the coconut oil is melted and the sugar has dissolved.
4. Pour the honey mixture over the oat mixture and stir well to coat all of the dry ingredients.
5. Transfer the granola mixture to the prepared pan and use a rubber spatula to firmly press the mixture into the pan. Moisten your fingers with water and press again to really pack the bars down (this will help prevent them from crumbling later).
6. Bake for 10 minutes. Remove the pan from the oven and use a rubber spatula to pack the mixture down once more. Bake for an additional 7 minutes. Let cool on a wire rack, then refrigerate for at least 2 hours.
7. Cut into 12 bars.
8. Bars will keep for 5-7 days in an airtight container at room temperature, but they hold their shape better if stored in the refrigerator!

Recipe creator, Andie Mitchell has a nifty website called (strangely enough) [andiemitchell.com](http://andiemitchell.com).

If you'd like a copy of Pecan Country News delivered to your email in-box each quarter, send an email to [pecancountry@savageequipment.com](mailto:pecancountry@savageequipment.com). Feel free to pass this little newsletter along to friends and family.