

PECAN COUNTRY NEWS

Edition 35

Spring 2021

On the Calendar

Jun 2-3:

GA Pecan Growers Conf.;
Perry, GA

Jun 7-10:

Texas Pecan Short Course
Texas A&M University

Jun 10-12:

OK Pecan Growers Conf.
Broken Arrow, OK

Jul 18-21:

TX Pecan Growers Conf.;
San Marcos, TX

Aug 3:

AL Pecan Growers
Summer Tour



Basil Savage and his
1965 tree shaker

The Texas Pecan Growers Association: A Century of growth!

In the year 1921, movies were still silent; automobiles were noisy, but becoming affordable (the price of a new Model T dropped to just \$325); and a group of Texas pecan growers gathered to form an official trade association. It's an event worthy of some celebration, and that will happen July 18-21, in San Marcos.

Your humble author thought it would be interesting to see how the Texas Pecan Growers celebrated their Golden Anniversary fifty years back, so he started paging through pecan publications from 1971. Sorting through the old magazines, it is surprising how many covers and how much page space was devoted to Pecan Queens. Apparently, they were a very big deal once upon a time.

In reading an August, 1971 *Pecan Quarterly* article, it appears that pecan conferences weren't all that different back then (aside from the Pecan Queen pageantry, of course). The opening paragraph went like this.

More than 400 members of the Texas Pecan Growers Association partici-



Miss Lucinda Lee Easley, Coryell County, is
the new Texas State Pecan Queen.

Texas' Golden Anniversary Pecan Queen participated in the 50th Golden Anniversary July 19-21, in Austin. The annual conference was filled with informative program presentations, equipment demonstrations, commercial exhibits and the Sate Pecan Show. In addition, a beautiful queen's pageant, banquet and time for visits contributed to three educational, enjoyable days.

There were fourteen commercial exhibitors participating in the 1971 conference, and attendees ventured out to Zilker Park, on the Colorado River, to check out the latest in pecan equipment.

Family traditions grow at Savage Equipment.

Savage Equipment has had a long, comfortable history with family ties and tradition. Besides the three generations of Savage family members that now help operate the various Savage enterprises, there are many examples of employees that have invested decades of their working lives at Savage, and they too, have become part of the extended family.

One great example of this is Will Wagoner who is part of the engineering team at Savage Equipment. Barely out of his teens, Will came on board with the company when there were just a dozen-or-so employees and only a few types of machines bearing the Savage name. He was hired for his skills in the painting booth but quickly adapted to a wide variety of roles— assembler, welder, machinist, delivery driver,



Will, with grandsons, Conner (L) & Jared (R) foreman and more. His ever-expanding knowledge of metals, manufacturing and

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Pecan Folks

Family traditions (cont. from page 1)

machinery have been an invaluable asset to the company and so many of its customers over the decades.

A couple of years back, Will's grandson, Jared hired on with the Savage Equipment parts department. Like his grandfather, Jared displayed a willingness to do just about anything and do it with a positive attitude. Not long after Jared came on board, his little brother, Conner, started helping out at the Savage pecan orchards, earning a reputation for quick learning and putting in a solid day's work.

He too, was eager to experience all the jobs the farm and ranch had to offer—everything from driving tractors, to working calves and setting up hog traps. More recently, Conner has been helping out with Savage Cracker assembly and other areas of the manufacturing plant.

It appears the grandsons may have inherited some of their grandad's skill and resourcefulness. If that holds true, the Savage team will be hoping for a long and fruitful future for them on the Savage team.

The story of a Georgia pecan farmer who's also a wife, mom and more

Marianne Brown came by her pecan farming instincts honestly enough. She grew up in pecan orchards while her father, Richard Grebel, farmed pecans and did consulting work for other Georgia growers. When it came time to choose a college major, however, she chose advertising as a career path that interested her. But, as the semesters rolled on, it would prove to be a poor fit. Marianne migrated easily back into pecan farming—even more so, when she met future husband, Thomas Brown, and they spent time working with her father in his orchards.

These days, the Browns grow pecans and do consulting work in partnership with Mr. Grebel. They also have their own orchards to manage as part of T&M Brown Farms, LLC. In all, they tend roughly 2000 acres of Georgia pecans, including recently added tracts of 1300 acres. Marianne is also involved in brokering pecan loads with her dad, as part of the Century pecan-cleaning operation.

If all the above activities aren't sufficient for a full life, Marianne also manages to serve as mom to three youngsters: Olivia, Harper and Beau—all under the age of six. Wow! Now THAT must be a scheduling challenge. Woman-of-the-Year nomination, anyone?

When asked if she considered it an added challenge to be a female in the predominantly male world of pecan growing, Marianne was quick to say how welcome she feels in the industry. "Other pecan growers are helpful and want you to succeed. They know that individual success reflects well on everyone in the industry." The helpful camaraderie among growers is one of the things she likes best about her choice to return to pecan farming after college. She is thankful for two other benefits to her life in pecans—the



The Brown Family

ability to do something different almost every day, and the opportunity to do meaningful work alongside her family.

Marianne and husband, Thomas, are eager to see future harvests from their own recently planted orchards. They look forward to the satisfaction of realizing the fruit of their own management decisions regarding varieties, spacing, irrigation, etc. We have a feeling it's all going to work out well, and abundant harvests are in store.

Pecan Pieces

News you can use!

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

Texas Pecan Short Course slated for late spring.

The highly regarded Texas Pecan Short Course is traditionally held in late January each year, but with the past year being what is was, that has changed for 2021. This gem of an educational opportunity will take place June 7th through 10th at its traditional home in Bryan/College Station, Texas.

Over the many decades of its history, the Texas Pecan Short Course has educated hundreds of new and prospective pecan growers of all ages and backgrounds. At just \$300 for four days of expert classroom and field instruction, this training would be a bargain at twice the price. According to the TPGA website,...

The Texas Pecan Short Course is a comprehensive educational program designed to teach people how to establish and manage a commercial pecan orchard for profit. Course content ranges from basic pecan tree anatomy and physiology to grafting, tree training, irrigation, fertilization, farm budget preparation and more. Participants will receive a blend of classroom instruction and field experiences at the Texas A&M Pecan Orchard, located in the Brazos River Bottom on the Texas A&M University Farm.

Staff and participants will, of course, be abiding by any appropriate state and local Covid safety protocols that are in place come June.

Shipping container availability affecting agriculture shipments.

You see them everywhere these days. Besides their more conventional locations—rolling down the interstate, stacked on train cars and packed to extraordinary heights on massive ships, you can now find shipping containers that have



been converted into barns, offices and even tiny houses. They are seemingly everywhere, and yet, they haven't been where many agricultural exporters needed them to be. Articles written in the early months of 2021 reveal the scarcity of shipping containers which began last year. An article on the FarmPress Blog (Are American farmers being boxed out of global marketplace? Feb 26, 2021, by Jim Costa) reveals that exporters of agricultural commodities, especially on the U.S. west coast, have encountered critical shortages of available shipping containers to get their products to overseas markets.

As U.S. consumers gain confidence in the economy, consumer goods from China are commanding space among a finite number of shipping containers, which were left idled as pandemic lockdowns spread globally. Demand for those containers by Asian exporters is high, and as economics would have it, some are willing to pay big money to get them back while some shipping companies oblige.

Almond shipments, along with other tree nuts and ag products, have been greatly delayed in getting to their Asian markets. Prices for shipping these containers have also risen dramatically.

According to a CNBC article (Shipping carriers reject tons of U.S. agricultural exports, opting to send empty containers to China, Jan 26, by Lori Ann LaRocco), the Federal Maritime Commission is investigating whether these carriers, that have refused U.S. export cargo, are in violation of the U.S. Shipping Act. The article also reveals the following.

Three in 4 containers from the U.S. to Asia are “going back empty,” according to Redwood Logistics CEO Mark Yeager, who supported the findings of CNBC’s analysis. “The reason for this is the Chinese are being so aggressive about trying to get empty containers back... that it’s hard to get a container for U.S. exporters.”

Western drought tough on pecan growers.

In a Feb 3, 2021 article by Lee Allen (Western Farm Press website), the author discusses the implications of an extended drought out west with Brian Driscoll, vice president and COO of Farmers Investment Company. Brian oversees thousands of pecan acres in Arizona and almost a thousand in Georgia. They were in the Green Valley Pecan

More Pecan Pieces

Cover up (cont. from page 3)

Company's orchards in southern Arizona observing post-harvest operations and discussing how the weather has affected the pecan crop this harvest season. Mr. Driscoll describes this as an "off year" due to the lack of monsoon rains last year.

It was really hot in June, July, August—blowtorch level heat—all the way into October, the driest year in Arizona in umpteen years. Pecans need a break with some cooling off at night and these trees didn't get any relief.

Although it was not part of this particular article, a quick look at the U.S. Drought Monitor map (available at www.droughtmonitor.unl.edu) reveals just what southwestern growers of all crops are up against. It appears most of Nevada, Utah, Arizona and New Mexico are either in "Extreme" or "Exceptional" drought conditions.

Driscoll also attributes their yield decrease to a "Halloween freeze" in 2019 that stressed pecan trees in both Arizona and New Mexico. This hard freeze damaged buds that "are not dormant in October" in the American Southwest.

Bacterial leaf scorch an issue in pecan orchards

An article, by the above title, appeared on Tree Nut Farm Press (Lee Allen, Mar 17, 2021). According to this article, Pecan Bacterial Leaf Scorch is a pathogen that was first noticed in the southeastern U.S., but has been evident in California, Arizona, Texas and New Mexico for about five years. PBLS was first believed to be a fungal disease, but later it was found to be bacterial.

The scorch, with symptoms of browning and necrosis of terminal leaflets, becomes apparent in late spring and is a primary concern for pecan trees under stressful conditions, be it environmental, nutritional, or physiological.

While it does not kill the trees, it is responsible for significant losses, university scientists say. Research has identified 30 cultivars susceptible to PBLS with Pawnee, Cheyenne, Barton, Cape Fear, Rome, and Oconee less resistant to the infection.

The bacterium can be transmitted in two ways, by grafting operations or by a "xylem-feeding insect" such as leafhoppers and spittlebugs. It is the piercing/sucking mouth-parts of these bugs that transfer the bacteria into

the plant xylem. Glassy-winged sharpshooters and adult pecan spittlebugs are two of the most common culprits. Unfortunately, the author tells, there is no cure.

Because the bacterium grows and multiplies in the xylem, tree roots can also be affected. Before leaf-scorching is visible, the bacteria are already at work damaging the roots, especially so in younger and smaller trees. Adjusting management practices to minimize stress will slow down the pace of tree decline, but there is no effective treatment for PBLS.

The best defense is prevention. The article recommends reducing insect vectors through monitoring with traps and insecticide. Ensure new plantings are disease free. Also, treating scion wood with hot water is shown to remove 97% of the disease. To get more detail, you can read the whole piece on the Tree Nut Farm Press website.

Argentina's pecan industry: small but growing

In the March, 2021 issue of Pecan South, you will find an informative article on Argentina's relatively small, but rising contribution to world pecan production, by Nadia Venticinque (journalist and staff member of Argentina's Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries). Ms. Venticinque informs us that pecan trees were first planted in Argentina, from seeds brought to the country by an ambassador to the U.S. in the 1800's. Argentina's introduction into commercial pecan farming is a much more recent development of less than three decades.

Located at the southern end of the South American continent, the land of Argentina extends over two thousand miles north-to-south. The country's extremely varied terrain and climate enable a vast array of natural vegetation and agricultural products. Pecan cultivation occurs mostly in the northern and central areas of the country and currently produces between two million and three million pounds annually. Planted pecan acreage is estimated at about 15,000 hectares (37,500 acres), and much of it is not yet in production. Most of Argentina's 300-400 pecan growers are farming less than 50 hectares (125 acres). Larger pecan farms "over 50 hectares have only been developed in the last 10 to 15 years. The estimated nominal annual growth ranges between 700 and 900 hectares per year." There is a wide variety of cultivars growing that includes Desirable, Pawnee, Stuart, Kiowa and many more. In the drier growing region of

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Featured Equipment

Pecan Cleaning Plants designed and built by the experts.



The Aspirator is used to separate out light debris and to grade nuts by weight. It is available in 24", 36" & 48" widths.



The Stick Remover uses a rotating sizing chain to remove sticks from the harvested nuts. It is available in 36", 48" & 60" widths.



The Sizer can be used to size pecans and as a cleaning reel. It is available with 36", 48" and 60" diameter reels.



The Stone Remover has two stages: one that removes heavy debris and one that takes out light debris. Available in 36" and 48" widths.



This pre-cleaning assembly incorporates a Pre-vac, Stick Remover, Sizer/Cleaning Reel, and a Trash Conveyor. Available in three different size configurations.



Savage makes a wide variety of elevators and conveyors as well as many types and sizes of bins.



The Dehuller is useful for stripping away pecan hulls and getting the most out of your crop.



The sorting table is available in various sizes. This one has the Vision, dual-spectrum sorter mounted on it.

When it's time to build your cleaning plant or upgrade the one you already have, you can trust the pecan-cleaning experts at Savage to help you design the ideal plant. The Savage team has been cleaning pecans and building cleaning machines for decades, and we would be proud to show you all that we've learned.

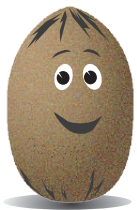
Just Plain Nuts

Argentina (cont. from page 4)

Argentina, Western and Wichita varieties are being planted, although these trees are young and production results are not yet known.

The Argentine pecan industry has developed export markets over the past decade or so—first into Southeast

Asia, and more recently, into Europe, the United States, Brazil, the Middle East and Russia. Exports have almost doubled each year over the past few years, and Argentine processors have recently begun exporting shelled pecans into markets in Europe and the Middle East.



In honor of the Texas Pecan Growers celebrating 100 years as an association, let's look at some other stuff that happened in 1921.

It happened in 1921.

The first American president elected with the help of women's votes, Warren G. Harding, was inaugurated. The 19th Amendment had passed Aug 26, 1920.

The first U.S. transcontinental airmail flight took letters from San Francisco to New York.

Americans tuned in to the first-ever radio broadcasts of sporting events (boxing and baseball).

Albert Einstein lectured in New York on his new "Theory of Relativity."

Slugger, Babe Ruth, scored an MLB-record 139th career home run. He later scored the most homers in a season, hitting 59.

Gen Billy Mitchell set out to prove the potential of combat airpower by sinking a captured German battleship with bombs dropped from airplanes.

In 1921...

...average annual net income was \$2938.

...a gallon of gas sold for 25 cents.

...a new home averaged just over \$6000

...the U.S. population was 108.5 mil. (now 333 mil.)

...today's dollar, adjusted for inflation, would be worth about 7 cents.

In keeping with our Pecan History theme, here's a recipe as it appeared in the "Pecan Pickin's" section of the Nov 1968 *Pecan Quarterly*.



From Wilbarger county, Mrs. Johnny Truelove has supplied a recipe for Buttermilk Pralines.

Buttermilk Pralines

- 1 cup buttermilk
- 2 cups sugar
- 1 teaspoon soda
- 2 teaspoons butter
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 1 ¼ cups pecans

Combine first three ingredients; cook over medium-high heat, stirring often until a soft ball forms. It will be a light-brown color. Remove from stove. Add butter and vanilla. Cool a few minutes. Add pecan, mixing well. Pour on waxed paper.

Mrs. Truelove's recipe was a winning entry in the 1966 Wilbarger County Pecan Bake Show.

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