

# PECAN COUNTRY NEWS

Volume 26

Winter 2019

## On the Calendar

### Jan 28-31:

TX Pecan Short Course;  
College Station, TX

### Feb 16:

NC Pecan Growers  
Workshop; Clinton NC

### Feb 22-23:

SEPGA Conference &  
Trade Show; Destin, FL

### Mar 3-5:

Western PGA Conf.;  
Las Cruces, NM

### Mar 26-27:

Georgia PGA Conf.;  
University of GA-Tifton

See you  
there!



## Two premier pecan events coming up in March.

Whether you're new to the pecan world or you're a third-generation grower, pecan conferences are prized opportunities for learning, networking and evaluating new equipment. They can also be a whole lot of fun. Two of the largest gatherings of pecan folks for 2019 will take place in March—one in the southwestern region and one in the southeast.

The Western Pecan Growers Conference, held in early March in Las Cruces, New Mexico, has been an annual highlight for southwestern growers for over five decades. Hundreds of growers from all over the U.S. and Mexico will spend

three days attending workshops, planning meetings and a first-class banquet (not to mention an entertaining auction of baked goods). Besides the formal educational courses, many growers enjoy the opportunity to find out how other growers are doing things and to examine new equipment that can help them in their orchards and plants. The daily offerings of delicious pecan goodies are always hard to resist. For more information on this conference, visit the Western Pecan Growers website: [www.westernpecan.org](http://www.westernpecan.org).

The fourth week of March will find pecan growers from across the U.S. and

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## Our pecan family bids farewell to a Louisiana pecan pioneer.

In early December, the pecan industry mourned the passing of a friend and cherished patriarch of our community. Ben Littlepage was born into the agricultural life in Monroe, Louisiana, later settling with his family in the central-Louisiana town of Colfax. After serving in the Korean Conflict, he attended and graduated from Louisiana State University's school of Agricultural Engineering. Over the years, Ben and his wife Kathryn served selflessly in the agricultural community of their home state and throughout the pecan-growing region of the U.S.. Their tireless efforts and generosity garnered special recognition from various organizations including, the Junior Chamber of Commerce, National Pecan Shellers Association, National Pecan Growers Council, Gamma Sigma Delta Honorary Agriculture Fraternity, and the Georgia Pecan Growers Association, to name a few.

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Jesse Diaz and Ben Littlepage swap hats at the Georgia Pecan Conference, March 2014

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# Pecan Folks

Littlepage (cont. from page 1)

Ben Littlepage was also a good friend to many in the Savage Equipment family and visited our home office in Oklahoma on many occasions. He often enjoyed being part of some good-natured practical joking with the Savage Equipment folks, especially Jesse Diaz. One such incident nearly got Ben kicked out of a hotel breakfast room when he was accused of coming in off the streets to score a free meal. Ben Littlepage was a valued mentor in our pecan family, and we will miss him dearly.



**Ben and Kathryn Littlepage on a visit to Savage Equipment with Loren Damron and Jesse Diaz**

## They grow pecans in North Carolina too.

North Carolina is not a state people tend to think of when it comes to pecan growing—tobacco and cotton maybe, but not pecans. However, there's a thriving community of pecan growers in North Carolina preparing for their 25<sup>th</sup> annual gathering coming up on February 16<sup>th</sup>. Everything kicks off at 8 a.m. at the Sampson County Expo Center in Clinton, NC. If you're interested in going, you can get a registration form online at [ncpecans.org](http://ncpecans.org) or you can just show up on Saturday, Feb. 16<sup>th</sup>. (It'll cost five bucks more if you choose option two.) We're looking forward to meeting more pecan growers and celebrating a quarter century of North Carolina pecan folks getting together.



Pecan events (cont. from page 1)

quite a few foreign countries gathered at the University of Georgia Conference Center –Tifton Campus. The full name is a mouthful: Georgia Pecan Growers Association Annual Educational Conference and Trade Show. As you might guess, it will include many valuable educational opportunities in the form of seminars presented by world-class experts in a variety of pecan-related fields. The show also presents ample opportunities to “kick the tires” on a multitude of equipment types from a wide variety of vendors (including, of course, Savage Equipment). You'll have many chances to socialize and network with experienced growers and shellers both large scale and small. Find out more about this conference at [www.georgiapecan.org](http://www.georgiapecan.org).

You don't have to be a member of these associations to attend, just go online to register and be sure to book your hotel early. We're excited about visiting with old friends and making new ones at these 2019 pecan events.



**A pecan conference provides the ideal opportunity to get your production questions answered and to check out all the new equipment.**

# 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.

### **A nutty idea: A little stress could be good for walnuts**

An article with the above title (written by Diane Nelson) appears on the University of California, Division of Agricultural and Natural Resources website and on the Western Farm Press website. It might not have much to do with pecans, but then again, it might. In any case, it's a very interesting study that might have far-reaching implications.

When it comes to watering walnuts, most California growers believe you need to start early to keep trees healthy and productive throughout the long, hot summer. But according to striking results from a long-term experiment in a walnut orchard in Red Bluff, growers can improve crop production if they hold off irrigation until later in the season and directly measure their trees' water needs.

The study covered five years of research in the Crain family's walnut orchards. These folks have been growing walnuts for 55 years, and they found the results of the study compelling.

It's a game-changer," said walnut grower Hal Crain, who welcomed researchers onto his orchard to test irrigation optimization. "It's clear to me you can improve nut quality and yield by applying water based on what the tree wants and needs, rather than just watering when it's hot outside and the soil is dry. That's a big deal for walnut growers and for the entire agricultural industry.

Crain's standard irrigation practice was typical of the industry, "irrigating in early to mid-May when the days grew warmer and the trees sprouted leaves." The theory was, that by irrigating early in the season, growers could preserve the water deeper in the soil and help nurture the trees through the hot summer. The results of the study show otherwise.

Instead, trees that grow in saturated soil early in the season don't develop the deep roots they need to thrive. "With all the water right there at the surface, the lower roots suffer," explained Bruce Lampinen,

UC Cooperative Extension orchard management specialist with the UC Davis Department of Plant Sciences. "Trees end up with a very shallow root system, which doesn't serve them well as they try to extract moisture from the soil later on. A lot of the symptoms we see like yellowing leaves and various diseases can all be explained by over watering," said Lampinen."

So when should you start irrigating? Apparently, the trees will tell you, if you know how to ask the question. That is done by using an air-pressure device that is able to gauge how hard the plant is working to pull moisture from the soil. Surface soil dryness does not necessarily mean the plant is suffering, but a pressure chamber or "pressure bomb" can tell you what is needed in a similar fashion to taking a person's blood pressure.

For the last five years, the team has been applying different water treatments to five blocks of trees. One block is getting standard, early irrigation. Crain's orchard managers begin irrigating the other blocks when the trees reach different levels of water stress based on pressure-chamber readings. The trees that experience moderate stress are doing the best. Their irrigation usually starts in mid-to-late June, several weeks later than when standard watering begins.

Lampinen says his "biggest take-away is, knowing when to start watering, is a really important factor to the health of your trees." Even though the pressure devices can cost in the thousands of dollars, he tells growers they would pay for themselves even if farmers only used them once a year to determine the best time to start watering.

Hal Crain doesn't need any more convincing. "When you irrigate based on your trees' needs, you optimize water," Crain says. "I'm not using less water overall, but the water I do use is producing more food."

*Originally published in the Fall 2018 issue of Outlook Magazine, the alumni magazine for the UC Davis College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences.*

### **News on other nuts**

A November 14, 2018 Western Farm Press article (Global almond production up, walnut production down; China trade slips, by Logan

# More Pecan Pieces

South African pecans (cont. from page 3)

Hawkes) sheds light on USDA production estimates for several nut categories and reports on trends that are affecting the market. Getting to the point, it looks like global almond production is up for 2018/19 at a projected 1.4 million metric tons, and Walnuts will be down at around 2 million metric tons. That's about a 7 percent up-tick for almonds, most of which are grown in the U.S. Most of the 2 percent drop in walnuts is the result of lower-than-projected production in China which produces most of the world's walnuts.

Both the European Union (predominantly Spain) and Australia are expecting gains in almond production. Australia will export more this year in a big way, up by 25 percent, to 65,000 tons, with most of the product going to the EU and China. Total Chinese imports of almonds are expected to drop due to drastically higher tariffs on U.S. nuts, raised from 10 percent to 25 and then 50 percent in 2018. The tariff on Australian almonds is only 2 percent on shelled nuts and 4.8 percent on in-shell.

U.S. walnut production should rise about 10 percent, to a record 626,000 tons, due to increases in both acreage and yields. Consumption of walnuts in the U.S. is expected to rise 17 percent to a record 201,000 tons. Thankfully, larger shipments to the EU will help offset lower exports to China due to retaliatory tariffs. Ending stocks are expected to rise sharply: 56 percent to a record 90,000 tons.

China's walnut production is expected to be down by about 15 percent to roughly 850,000 tons mostly due to weather issues in 2018. Other walnut-producing countries, including Ukraine, Chile, Turkey and the EU overall, are expecting healthy gains in production this year.

## More online help for farmers from USDA

Agricultural producers now have another tool available to help them better manage operations and deal with natural disasters. It's a website called [farmers.gov](http://farmers.gov).

"Agriculture is a risky business," said Agriculture Secretary Sonny Perdue. "At USDA, we're here to help you prepare, recover, and build long-term resilience to natural disasters. Whether you want to

visit your local USDA service center or visit our new [farmers.gov](http://farmers.gov), we want to help you get the help you need.

## Disaster assistance available for farmers affected by Hurricane Michael

In a Dec 20 press release, the Georgia Department of Agriculture announced new steps taken by the Georgia legislature to provide near-term relief to the state's farmers suffering from the effects of Hurricane Michael.

The Fiscal Year 2019 Appropriation Act was amended to provide emergency funding for state agencies and local governments in areas most heavily impacted by Hurricane Michael. Funds include \$55 million for emergency disaster relief loans.

The primary purpose of the funding is to provide timely relief to agriculture community that may be waiting for other disaster program money and insurance funds to be available.

To be eligible for assistance, the applicant must be a farmer suffering a loss to their income as a result of Hurricane Michael. Loans will have a 7-year term with a graduated rate starting at 1 percent. For more information, visit [www.gdaonline.com](http://www.gdaonline.com) or [www.agr.georgia.gov](http://www.agr.georgia.gov).

## Damage assessment and solutions for growers in Georgia Pecans magazine

Now that some time has passed since the devastating hurricanes of late 2018, growers, insurance agencies and governmental bodies have had time to assess and take steps to begin providing relief. The December issue of *Georgia Pecans* is full of statistics on the impact and helpful information to aid the many who are struggling in the aftermath.

Rebuilding orchards is on the minds of many growers in the southeastern states. An article by Dr. Lenny Wells, University of Georgia Extension Horticulturist, examines the pros and cons of several varieties that could be good choices to inter-plant back into damaged orchards.

Other articles provide an in-depth analysis of storm damage to agriculture and some suggestions on minimizing storm risks in the future.

# Featured Equipment

## Savage offers many great choices for your orchard spraying needs.

To protect the tremendous investment you've made in your trees, you need an effective, high-quality sprayer that's also the right fit. Tree height, orchard acreage, budget and tractor horsepower all have a significant impact on which sprayer is the best fit on your farm. You need some choices, and Savage has lots of them. Along with the many sizes of PTO-driven sprayers that Savage manufactures, we offer engine-driven and PTO-driven sprayers built by Nelson Manufacturing. In addition to

the sprayer sizes described below, you can order any of the 500-gallon Savage sprayers with a 1000-gallon capacity instead.

We're also proud to offer Nelson Hardie orchard sprayers. These finely crafted machines feature galvanized frames made with 3"x8" thick-wall rectangular tubing and heavy-gauge stainless steel on the tanks, hoods, doors and panels. All plumbing fittings are stainless as well, providing the ultimate in trouble-free spraying. Nelson manufactures three sizes of PTO-driven sprayers and four sizes of powerful engine-driven sprayers. These include the mighty Super-92 which sports a 325HP John Deere diesel engine, a 1000-gallon tank and dual 46" fans.



Savage 5537



Savage 5740



Savage 5540

### Savage Sprayer Sizes

Model Number	Tank Capacity	Fan/Volute Size	Length/Width/Height	PTO/HP Required
5525	500	25"/36"	150"/72"/66"	540/45HP
5528	500	28"/36" or 48"	150"/72"/66"	540/60HP
5534	500	34"/48"	150"/72"/66"	540/70HP
5537	500	37"/48"	150"/72"/66"	1000/90HP
5540	500	40"/56"	150"/72"/66"	1000/110HP
5740	1000	40"/60" or 72"	207"/91"/69"	1000/120HP



Savage 5534



Savage 5528



Nelson 4000P



Nelson 6800P



Nelson Super 80



Nelson Super 92

# Just Plain Nuts

## Did you catch the *Super American Pecan-a-thon*?

If you didn't hear about it, or you forgot to get online and check it out, you're not too late. *The Super American Pecan-a-thon* is still viewable on the American Pecans website, [americanpecans.com/pledgepecans](http://americanpecans.com/pledgepecans), and on Epicurious.com on the "videos" page (At least it was still on both sites on Dec 31st when this was written.)

What is this unusual event? It started back in mid-November when the American Pecan Council teamed up with Epicurious to create an "online variety show" that

showcases the American Pecan through entertainment, decorating ideas, and of course, great food ideas that take the pecan well beyond the traditional holiday fare. The face-paced program runs about eighteen minutes. The show includes some faces that are familiar to some of our readers, including Marianne Brown of Georgia, Ben and Laura King from California, Heather Salopek of New Mexico, and Oklahoma pecan growers Mike and Lotsee Spalding. You'll hear some music from Kortney Chase and The Iveys (of the El Paso, Texas area pecan family).

The *Pecan-a-thon* may not quite rival the Superbowl halftime show, but you'll probably get a kick out of it (and some great recipes).



This is another great recipe from Grandma's Molasses. ([grandmasmolasses.com/recipes](http://grandmasmolasses.com/recipes))

## *Pecan Tassies*

### Ingredients:

- refrigerated pie dough
- 1 1/2 cups pecans (chopped)
- 1 1/2 cups sugar (+1/2 cup for opt. caramel sauce)
- 1/2 cup Grandma's® Original Molasses
- 1/4 cup orange juice (or 2 Tbsp.)
- 2 eggs
- 2 Tbsp. melted butter
- 3 tsp. vanilla
- 1/8 tsp. salt
- 1/2 cup flour
- powdered sugar (optional)

### Optional salted caramel sauce:

- salted caramel drizzle
- 1/4 cup butter
- 1/2 cup heavy cream
- 1 tsp. sea salt

### Directions:

Preheat oven to 350F. Remove pie dough from the container, unroll on work surface. Using a 3" round cookie cutter cut out rounds. Press each crust round

into greased mini-size muffin tin. In a large bowl, combine pecans, sugar, Grandma's Molasses, orange juice, eggs, melted butter, vanilla, and salt. Once mixed, gradually add flour until blended. Fill each cup with pecan mixture to 2/3 full (about a heaping tsp). Bake 20 minutes, until shells are golden brown. Let cool, remove from pan. Sprinkle with powdered sugar or drizzle with salted caramel (optional).

**For Salted Caramel Sauce:** In a medium saucepan heat sugar over medium heat until all sugar is liquefied 3-4 min. will be a golden brown color. Remove the pan from heat and add butter, stir constantly. This will make the mixture bubble vigorously. After butter is incorporated place pan back on medium heat, slowly stir in heavy cream until smooth. Take the mixture off heat add 1 tsp. of salt or to taste.

**Recipe makes about 48 Tassies, and that's a bunch!**



Dang—those look yummy.



If you've got a pecan story, a good, clean joke or a pecan recipe you'd like to share, send it along to [pecancountry@savageequipment.com](mailto:pecancountry@savageequipment.com). We love to hear from our *Pecan Country* neighbors.