

Nutty News



Summer

August 2009



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'09 Crop Outlook Not Encouraging

At the end of July, 2009 does indeed appear to be our "off-year". Young and well managed trees look to be somewhat promising, except Desirable. But, then the Desirable seem to always surprise us because of their practice for having one and two nut clusters.

From my observation, the older trees, 20 years and older, is where the crop is very light. That would, for the most part, be Stuart and yard trees. And knowing they continue to be the dominant varieties in NC is why we have reported that crop yields are expected to reflect that we will experience our off-year.

The upside to off years, generally the crop is of higher quality. For some, that will be a relief following the flood of mess the

trees shed in '08.

Crop management in off years always causes one to think hard on just how aggressive they should be. At this stage the question might be whether to use fungicide to protect the few nuts against scab. If there is a decent crop of Pawnee, Cape Fear or Desirable, you might think long and hard. On the other hand with a marginal crop of Stuarts you might keep the jug on the shelf. Scab will be no worse next year whether or not any spraying is done. The real question is weevil management. Weevils will be present whether there is a crop or not. And if unchecked, weevil population can reach a very destructive level, taking years to get under control, even with the best of sprayers.

Sevin, or a generic brand, is one of the least expensive chemicals pecan growers use. Especially where there is a history of significant weevil problems, a couple applications during early to mid August might be cost compensated in following years. In addition to the weevil, timely applications will help to keep Stink Bugs, Twig Girdlers and Hickory Shuck worms in check.



2010 Workshop Scheduled

As long term members of NCPGA know, efforts are made to hold our annual workshops in different locations to avail its programs to area farmers in the hope of informing them of the potential that the pecan has.

Following the very good program we enjoyed in Duplin County this year, we will be moving a bit further north into Lenoir County for the 2010 program. The scheduled date is Saturday, February 13, 2010 at the Lenoir County Extension Center located at 1791 Hwy 11 and 55, 1.5 miles south of Hwy 70 in Kinston. There are several sizable orchards in Lenoir County and one will be chosen as the demonstration orchard to visit following the indoor program.

We have learned there are many large pecan producers in the counties of Martin, Lenoir, Bertie, Washington, etc. If true numbers could be determined, that section of NC could well lead the state in pecan production. Our objective, of course, is to avail our programs and hope that we can attract them to become active in NCPGA and share their experiences with our members. Should anyone have a specific subject matter they wish to have discussed, or a speaker of special interest, please let us know.

Major Off-year Insect Pests

We talk a lot about Scab and Weevils and should. Yet, there are other varmints worthy of concern, especially during off crop years. Pictured (See photo page) is the result of a visit by the Pecan Nut Case bearer. Since few of our members are able to mechanically crop-thin, we look to the Case bearer to thin crop overloads. The sad part is during light crop years, when we can least afford it, that pest will take as many as during heavy crop years.

In the heavy producing areas, growers spray diligently against the Case bearer. Monitoring traps used in those areas have also been used in North Carolina. The years we monitored for the Case bearer, we did not reach the threshold level growers in Georgia use to begin spraying.

Being a nut feeding insect, spray material needs to reach each nut on the tree to achieve really good coverage. So, for the most part, we grimace and bear it. Since Case bearer damage is so visible we wanted to speak about it and identify it with this classic picture of its damage.

NCPGA Primary/Secondary Education Program

For any who are fed by participating in a learning environment for the young and open minds, NCPGA's annual educational program coordinated by our Educational Advisor, Mike Parker provides that excellent opportunity. The 2009 program is scheduled for October 28 and 29. Mike is joined by other Extension personnel, NCDA & CS and the Pecan Growers Association in providing this educational experience to 1,200 second graders in Columbus County.

The 2009 program will be the latest in your Association's co-sponsors with the N C Pecan Harvest Festival in Whiteville, NC.

The level of success of this program is dependent on volunteers willing to contribute their time in such a rewarding way. There are a number of easily performed, yet much needed, tasks to insure a meaningful and worthwhile experience for the youngsters and their class room teachers. The shared picture is the best of example of inquisitive youngsters, as well as a committed leader in this program, Mr. Rossie Ward of Columbus Co. Dr. Mike Parker's telephone number is 919-515-1198, email mike.parker@ncsu.edu. Mike will be very pleased to talk with you and invite you to join his team.

NC Pecan Harvest Festival

Again, on November 7, the Association will co-sponsor along with the Whiteville Downtown Development Committee, the 8th annual Pecan Harvest Festival. In each of the past eight festivals, the day has been seasonal cool under brilliant skies and several thousands of festival goers marching past the Pecan Growers Association educational booth.

As an educational focused organization, volunteers working with the booth stay busy talking with festival goers about pecans and distributing pecan related handouts.

In exchange for the investment of time and dollars, your Association is provided the most prominent space of the hundreds of exhibitors, we are extremely well publicized in various media and often acknowledged from the stage during the festival's official proceedings.

Along with the Association's involvement at the State Fairs and the Southern Farm Show, the N C Pecan Harvest Festival indeed allows for excellent visibility of the pecan. And, that's what NCPGA is about.

As with the Educational component, volunteers are needed to staff the booth throughout the seven to eight hour day. Your reward will be in the form of satisfaction in knowing that you may have shared with others some tidbit you may have learned from being an active NCPGA member.

Email Addresses

Is our email address book up to date? Please let Laurie Wood know if you are receiving this news letter by U S mail and have the means and are willing to receive this quarterly newsletter by email. There is a printing and mailing cost for each sent by US mail, to say nothing about volunteer time to get the job done. Laurie's name and contact info is on this newsletter. If it's your preference to continue getting the Nutty News by US mail, be assured we will continue doing just that.

Subscriptions

Payments have been made to cover subscriptions to the Pecan Grower and Pecan South. By now you should have received copies. If not please let us know. Both these are very good publications and not only do we want you to get them, we strongly encourage your reading them.

NC State Fair Recipe Competition

Cooks, get ready. Again in 2009, NCPGA has provided prize money and will cooperate with the NCDA & CS in sponsoring a pecan recipe cooking contest at both the Raleigh State Fair and the Mountain State Fair. There will be first, second, third and honorable mention prize money awarded. Entry deadline at the Raleigh State Fair is October 10 and date of contest is October 22.

The pecan recipe contest is a cook's favorite. Even though the prize money offered is not the highest, the number of entries is always at the top. NCPGA members are allowed to participate and have, in fact, been winners at several levels.

About Pollination

Without the burden of having to prove one's position, it's easy to take a firm position. It is with that mindset that I firmly contend that weather conditions during the late April to mid May pollinating season was partially responsible for the weak crop set we have seen.

It seemed, during that three week period, either and sometimes both the winds were quite strong or we had drizzly and showery weather. It came to mind then that if a crop was set under those conditions, it would defy what is considered good pollinating weather.

The drizzly weather would certainly contribute to self-pollinated nuts which are always weak and almost all are aborted. On older trees where the pollination window is measured in hours instead of days, a couple days of drizzly weather is a precursor to light crops.

Since we don't control the weather, our burden becomes greater to select varieties where history and research have proven that certain varieties will always work best together, regardless of weather conditions. It has also confirmed beliefs that in addition to placing pollinators upwind of the orchard, the most effective pollinators should also be within the orchard to take advantage of wind flow regardless of its direction.

To conclude, simply selecting a type 1 and type 2 tree does not insure that maximum pollination will occur. It takes selected varieties of each to achieve good pollination. Persons experienced in orchard design and establishment have information needed to help in making an informed decision. .

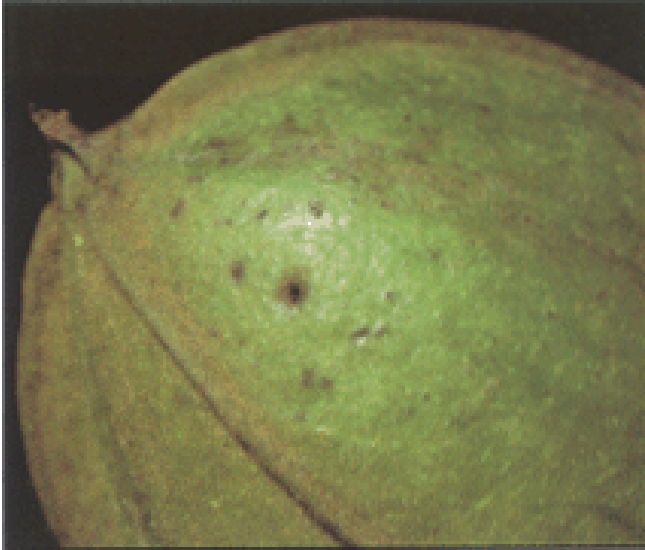
Mandan

The last Nutty News shared with you the Syrup Mill pecan variety. There will be some of the Syrup Mill available for NC planting this Fall. In this edition, we call attention to the new variety, Mandan. Both the Pecan Grower and Pecan South have included articles about the Mandan and its outstanding promise. While we need to keep that phrase in mind "if it's too good to be true, it probably is" we can hold our hopes high for that variety which will be the answer to much of what we've been looking for.

Since pictures accompanied the articles in those publications, space will not be used here to repeat what's already in print. You are strongly encouraged to carefully look over those articles and see if the Mandan might fit into your plans. Further characteristics about the Mandan can be found on Lakeview Pecans web site at, www.lakeviewpecans.com

Lakeview Pecans in Bailey, NC was one of the few pecan nurseries in the country to whom the Mandan graft wood was provided. Because of the scarcity, only enough grafting material was provided to begin the propagation process. Given the only course: that of grafting the tree in '09 in the nursery, then to plant grafted tree in the orchard and then to pet and pamper the tree to produce graft wood for further propagation will take time. At the very earliest, Mandan may be available in 2011, more likely 2012. Plant propagation is one of those things that can not be hurried along.

Lakeview Pecans will be exhibitors at the upcoming workshops and field days. They will be most pleased to talk about the Mandan and other available varieties.



This is absolute evidence that the pecan weevil has been in the orchard. The aborted pecan will be on the ground. Spray application should begin immediately.



The pecan Nut Case Bearer does his damage early in May and often destroys an entire nut cluster. A 50% crop loss is all together possible.



NCPGA Director Rossie Ward showing second graders what to expect from his pecan cracker



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Mailing Label for USPS edition

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