



Nutty News

News from the NC Pecan Growers Association

Spring Edition

March 2006



In Memory of Reverend David Lupton January 27, 1937—January 26, 2006

- Organizing Member of NC Pecan Growers Association
- Director or officer since inception
- Was serving as Vice President of NC Pecan Growers Association
- Was serving as a Director in Southeast Pecan Growers Association
- Lifetime supporter the Pecan Industry



David sharing his knowledge of pecan grafting and his gift of teaching.

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Mark Your Calendars

- June 6, 2006 First Annual Twi-light Orchard Tour
- Southeastern Pecan Growers Annual Meeting March 11, 2006 Panama City, Florida

Timely To Do List February/March 2006

Timely to do list

- Take soil samples
- Time for winter fertilization programs
- Take graft wood and store properly
- Begin pruning / training
- Evaluate marketing plans
- Attend educational seminars



February 11 2006 Workshop

What a satisfying sight to see more than a hundred people on a rainy and cold Saturday morning coming out to talk about pecans. It was also a relief that the caterer could find enough food to feed the masses. Again, those attending included growers from Virginia and South Carolina.

In spite of the fact that the orchard tour was cancelled because of the threatening weather, the quality of the indoor presentations more than made up for that. The favorable comments about the program were due in part to expanding the time for each presentation, allowing for more in-depth coverage.

It is pleasing to share that NCPGA membership grew on Saturday. We welcome new members, joining on Saturday: Lloyd and Patricia Bumgarner, John Henry Carr, Gary Baggett, David Parrish, Johnny Mangum, and John Lewis.

The Association is indeed thankful for the sponsors and their contributions which will offset the program costs leaving some funds for the general needs of NCPGA. On page 4 of this newsletter is a list of our much appreciated sponsors. When possible, please let the sponsors know how much their support means to NCPGA. They truly are appreciated.

THANK YOU SPONSORS (see page 4 for a list of sponsors)

It Was a Very Good Year

For those growing pecans in hopes of returning a profit, the winter months we are now in are a bit better than the past two winters, when about all we could do was to lick our wounds. The late season drought took its toll in un-irrigated orchards, yet the fruit quality was at an acceptable level. Also taking its toll was pecan scab. Even as dry as the fall season was, late season nut-scab was bad on many varieties, Pawnees especially. That could well serve as a warning how bad it could have been had the frequent hurricanes passed close by leaving a prolonged wet weather period.

On a larger scale, industry prices remained strong on good quality pecans. That is attributed in part to light crops along some gulf-coast regions in the path of several major hurricanes during 2005. The cold storage carry over is expected to remain manageable giving cause to feel optimistic about the '06 crop.

"Farming looks mighty easy when
your plow is a pencil and you are a
thousand miles from the cornfield"
Dwight D. Eisenhower

Support to the NCSU Agricultural Foundation

The Board of Directors voted to provide a modest contribution to the NCSU Agricultural Foundation in acknowledgement of and appreciation for Mike Parker and Allan Thornton and their continuing support of the Association.

The contribution is unrestricted and will be used as they see fit in furtherance of their programs.

While the contribution is small in monetary terms, the University looks favorably on commodity groups willing to acknowledge their continuing support and it is in that thinking the contribution was approved.

While growers bring a storehouse of knowledge about growing pecans, we need the insights from organized research and Cooperative Extension efforts they bring to the Board and the Association. With those resources, the educational programs we enjoy are second to none throughout the country.



The "Excel" Pecan Variety... "Looks Like a Good Thing"

As we learn more about pecan scab, one issue holds true in every discussion, in high-density orchards of the same variety, scab will appear regardless of spray frequency or chemicals used. It is with that well-established fact that the new variety "Excel" was welcome news. Bill Goff of Auburn University wrote about that variety in a recent Pecan South. Mike Parker spoke about it during the recent NCPGA annual workshop. Bill Goff will again speak about it during the SEPGA Annual Convention on March 11 in Panama City, Florida. While we can celebrate the "Excel" scab free status, it too will develop scab given time and under certain climatic conditions.

So what does the Excel offer?

All early indications strongly suggest it is a very good variety worthy of being included in orchard designs and establishments,

on a trial basis. Excel has been compared to the Gloria Grande variety, but with a more attractive, eye appealing nutmeat. Gloria Grande, negatives first, this variety produces a huge pecan causing quality to suffer during droughts. The shell is very thick which is good considering wildlife predators, but difficult to hand crack. Gloria Grande positives are its disease resistance, strong tree structure and like the Stuart variety, it is a consistent bearer.

Availability of the Excel is yet to be determined. Comments about it being a patented variety might suggest availability could be limited. Bill Bunn, LakeView Pecans in Bailey is in the process of attempting to obtain graft wood from Excel to propagate during the spring of '06. That effort will be intensified next month while attending the SEPGA Annual Convention. If successful, the Excel might be available as early as this winter in container grown trees at LakeView Pecans.



Excel
Promising New
Variety
Comparison to
other varieties
(left photo)
Photo of nutmeat
(right photo)

Southern Farm Show

While working the NCPGA educational booth at the Southern Farm show, Gaylon Ambrose and Bill Bunn were bombarded with questions about growing pecans, usually focusing on fertilization and pecan insect pests. If we responded once, we responded hundreds of times to "tell me what to do about that little white worm or what causes that hole in my pecans". Each questioner was given the same courteous response, given that they were very serious. That led to the creation of handouts available at our workshop which will be added to NCPGA information files.

As is often the case, following a strong pecan crop, interest in starting pecan orchards is strong. If only some of those talking about establishing sizable plantings follow through, the pecan tree population in NC will increase by thousands.

The unseasonably warm weather during the three-day show brought out many attendees. There were only brief lulls when Gaylon and I could wander a bit to see the rest of the show.

The Southern Farm Show is but one of the highly visible programs NCPGA is involved in to promote the pecan industry. We have been there for the past several years and plan to again, as long as interest remains as high as it is.

February 11, 2006 Educational Workshop Sponsors

Thank You Sponsors !

PROGRAM COORDINATORS:

North Carolina Pecan Growers Association
North Carolina Cooperative Extension Service
NCDA & CS Southeast Marketing Center

GOLD SPONSOR (MEAL SPONSOR):

North Carolina Farm Bureau
Ms. Debbie Hamrick, Raleigh, N C

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Mr. Alton Woodard, Princeton, NC

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LakeView Pecans,
Mr. Bill Bunn, Bailey, NC

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LakeView Pecans, Bailey, NC

The Nut House Inc, Roseboro, NC

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North Carolina Department of Agriculture
and Consumer Services

Scab, It's Here

We heard Allan Thornton's highly informative presentation at the February 11th workshop on the subject of scab. We're seeing more of it now that we are looking more closely and learning more about scab and its effects on the crop.

Scab was rampant in '05 even on some varieties thought to be somewhat resistant, Stuarts. We learned in '05 that heavy

infestations noted in September is a done deal, it's a wait till next year. Some valid thinking is that the early spray applications are the most important, that is applications prior to leafing out. That application is targeted toward the over wintering spores in the trees. An application during bud break and another on young tender leaves, in many years will be sufficient till nuts begin to size during July.

The following images of Scab are provided for reference as you begin scouting the orchard for disease and insect pests.

Scab on Leaves and Shucks



Winter Fertilization

Indeed, 2005 was a rebound year for pecan trees yielding a satisfying crop. General conversations and observations suggest this occurred on marginally managed trees as well as in well-managed orchards. Given that, the likelihood of a decent 2006 crop in well-managed orchards is far greater. Without replacing the stored energy needed to produce the heavy '05 crop, yields in '06 will be disappointing. Orchards receiving yearly fertilizer applications, thereby maintaining levels of energy reserves, are in a far stronger position to produce another decent crop in 2006.

Knowing that roots are most active during the winter months when there is no foliage to support, would suggest that winter months are more ideal for fertilizer applications. Research continues as expected to document this fact.

Mike Parker, during the Workshop, spoke loudly about the need for soil sampling to determine nutritional needs. From reports, if you've not already taken samples, it could be 5-6 weeks getting results back, too late for the optimum fertilization window. If that be the case, and knowing that pecans require a pH. of 6.0 or better,

a thought could well be to apply a ton of lime per acre as soon as possible. That would be, of course, after gathering the soil sample.

EMAIL ADDRESSES UNBLOCK

First the kindest appreciation for providing email addresses used to share NCPGA news. We are saving time and money which are being used in beneficial ways for NCPGA members.

Now, allow us to ask those who block the emails guarding against unwanted messages to please unblock for NCPGA mail. Following each mailing several emails are returned because of blocking. Be assured you will not be sent anything not pecan related, nor will email addresses be sold or otherwise given to anyone.

THANKS MUCH

Officers and Directors for NCPGA

During the business meeting, members voted to move Elbie Powers into the Vice-presidents position, filling the unexpired term of David Lupton. The Directors slot vacated by Elbie is scheduled for election during the annual meeting in 2007. The membership voted to leave that directors slot open until the regularly scheduled election takes place.

NCPGA has been well served by strong and committed directors and definitely needs to continue doing so. Any dues paying member of the Association is authorized to serve as a director, when elected by its membership. If interested in serving, please contact either Laurie Wood or Bill Bunn. A brief explanation of expectations and responsibilities is available and will provided upon request.

A Little Humor.....

DOG RULES

- The dog is not allowed in the house
- Okay, the dog is allowed in the house, but only in certain rooms
- The dog is allowed in all rooms, but has to stay off the furniture
- The dog can get on the old furniture only
- Fine, the dog is allowed on all furniture, but is not allowed to sleep on the bed
- Okay, the dog is allowed on the bed, but only by invitation
- The dog can sleep on the bed whenever he wants, but not under the covers
- The dog can sleep under the covers by invitation only
- The dog can sleep under the covers whenever he wants
- Humans must ask permission to sleep under the covers with the dog



**NC Pecan Growers
Association**

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NCPGA Mission Statement
“To encourage and promote research and education in all phases of the pecan industry, to interact with others in the interest of pecan growers throughout the region, and to promote pecans as a commercial crop in North Carolina.”

**We're on the web:
www.ncpecans.org**



Mailing label goes here

First Annual Twi-light Orchard Tour Scheduled for June 6, 2006

Tuesday June 6, 2006 has been set for the first Annual Twi-light Orchard Tour. NCPGA President, and owner/operator of LakeView Pecans, Bill Bunn, is pleased to open his “modest Operation” as host of what is hoped to become an annual event. LakeView Pecans is located one mile east of Bailey, just off US 264-A. A map will be available before the event.

The program will begin around 6:00 PM and last as long as anyone wants to stay and talk pecans. Dark should be somewhere around 9:00 PM. Light refreshments, snacks, and beverages will be provided by the NC Pecan Growers Association.

The orchard of about 250 trees includes ages from one-year to 20 years, from well groomed to hurricane raged trees. There are 12-15 different varieties, most are not yet bearing.



The tour will include a small nursery of about 3,000 trees being propagated and grown for sale as container grown pecan trees, most of which are grafted to varieties grown at LakeView Pecans.

Program topics are expected to focus heavily on monitoring for insect and disease pests, fertility programs, and orchard floor management on trees of all ages.

The orchard is not presented as a model operation, there are many “oops”! The orchard is provided as a learning tool, one where management practices can be monitored on several varieties most commonly planted in NC.

Overnight accommodations are available, only a short from the farm at the intersection of US 64 and I-95. Details will follow as the date nears.