



# Nutty News

Late Summer/ Fall Edition

September 2006

North Carolina Pecan Growers Association

## TWI-LIGHT ORCHARD TOUR



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The storm clouds departed and the sun shown as nearly 100 gathered at Lake View Pecans near Bailey, NC for the first NCPGA Twi-light orchard tour. Included among the throng were several area County Extension Agents and Master Gardeners, taking advantage of the excellent learning opportunity to help them as they interact with others in the interest of pecans.

The mightiest salute in recognition of the program's success goes to NCPGA Director and Beaufort County Extension Agent, Gaylon Ambrose. Gaylon took the lead role in the program's preparation and along with wife Carolyn deserve, all credit for the picnic style cookout, complete with homemade butter pecan ice cream. They,

their daughter, son-in-law, and their toddler, speaks loudly about their commitment to the Association and the pecan industry.

Others who made presentations and are most deserving of recognition are: NCDA&CS's Laurie Wood, NCSU's Wayne Mitchem, Ken Sorensen, Mike Parker and Allan Thornton. Also, and especially important, was the presence of several NCPGA directors who joined other grower members in talking about specific pecan related issues uniquely important to them.

Regrets following the Tour were few, the most significant being the disappearance of daylight before the program was done. Most definitely, early June provided an ideal time to

observe and talk about many dynamics at work in pecan orchards.

Tour hosts, Bill and Sue Bunn along with daughter Angela and gentle Ben gratefully acknowledge the help provided in support of the Tour and feel humble that so many came and shared the experience with them.

North Carolina Pecan Growers Association would like to Gratefully Acknowledge and Express Sincere Appreciation to:

**EAST CAROLINA FARM CREDIT**

For Sponsorship of the NC Pecan Growers

## Workshop Scheduled for March 24, 2007

North Carolina Pecan Growers Educational Advisor, Dr. Mike Parker of NC State University, has confirmed that the Association's 13<sup>th</sup> annual Educational Workshop is scheduled for Saturday March 24, 2007. In following the NCPGA's early practice of holding annual meetings at different locations, the 2007 program will be held at the Johnston County Extension Center in Smithfield, NC. The directors held to its concern for travelers by staying near I-95 with the major intersecting road being US 70.

The workshop is expected to include a highly beneficial educational program with a catered mid-day lunch. Weather permitting, the program will conclude with a tour stop at Woodard's Pecan Nursery near Princeton. Alton and Faye Woodard will host the group in their orchard to discuss production related topics. A brief annual meeting of the Association will be held to transact business and to elect directors and officers. Since the final program for the Workshop is a work in progress at this time, any

thoughts or suggestions concerning its content will be gratefully received. Contact addresses are shown on the last page of this newsletter.

### Volunteers Requested

To assist at the NC Pecan Harvest Festival Education Program Thursday November 2nd and/or Friday November 3rd And / or for the festival on Saturday October 4th Your assistance will be greatly appreciated. Contact us!

## NC Pecan Harvest Festival November 2 - 4, 2006

Plans for the 4<sup>th</sup> annual NC Pecan Harvest Festival are underway for the first week in November. Should the prior three festivals serve as a guide, Saturday November 4<sup>th</sup> will begin under a warm sun with thousands gathering in Whiteville to enjoy the daylong festivities featuring "The Superior Nut". Under the capable leadership of Whiteville Downtown Development Commission, Suzanne King, we are indeed privileged to co-partner as Festival sponsors. As with the prior three years, Suzanne has assured the Association that any and all reasonable requests to make the daylong program a success will be

provided, including space for an educational display at the most prominent position on the blocks-long festival route. As with every great opportunity there comes a burden. And it is in that vein an appeal is being made for as many NCPGA members as possible to come join us. This is an outstanding opportunity to provide an educational program for the thousands sure to attend the festival. The need begins with setting up two tents early, being active and visible during the day and exhibit breakdown around 4:00 p.m.

The Thursday and Friday preceding the Festival will be equally as fun-filled during the educational programs aimed at the second graders in the Columbus County area. NCPGA's Educational Advisor,

Dr. Mike Parker continues to lead our efforts to bring an educational focus on the pecan to youngsters whose minds are so open and anxious to learn. This program also needs lots of warm bodies for it's potential to be reached. At least 10 people are needed to take certain responsibilities at different locations as the hundreds of youngsters, teachers and others move through the two-hour program. This is an excellent opportunity for NCPGA to meet the educational component of its Mission Statement. Volunteers are needed and asked for. Please contact Dr. Parker by email at [mike\\_parker@ncsu.edu](mailto:mike_parker@ncsu.edu) or by phone at 919-515-1198.

## Subscriptions

Offered as an apology and to inform our valued members, there is a need to speak to this issue. As we all know, your membership includes subscriptions to the Pecan Grower, a quarterly publication from the Georgia Pecan Growers Association, and Pecan South, a monthly publication by the Texas Pecan Growers Association. As a matter of fact, nearly, half the membership cost goes to providing publications and even then, they are provided at a significant reduction in cost to NCPGA members. First, to those questioning why the publications were slow in coming, thank you for your well-deserved concern. As expla-

nation, NCPGA does not have paid staff to assist in record keeping. Instead, that falls on volunteers who, willingly, take time when they can find it, to carry out the Association's business. Available time and as a convenience for the publishers, NCPGA has not been sending in names several times each year. Instead they are accumulated and sent once it's felt those intending to, have renewed. We then follow that up later as the need seems to dictate. The membership list was sent late May with a request to begin with the July Edition. I believe we are on a July-June calendar and long-standing members should not have missed an issue. For newer

members, apologies are extended and we thank you for your patience and understanding.

### Late Summer/Fall Timely To Do List

- Volunteer for N C Pecan Harvest Festival
- Manage pecan weevil
- Groom orchard floor for harvest
- Finish bud grafting
- Tissue analysis on troubled trees
- Check harvest equipment

## Crop Conditions

As nut-sizing is in process, it can now be seen that crop yields this year in NC will be somewhat consistent with those expected throughout the southeast, much weaker than 2005. The younger and more actively growing trees are again leading the way with a fairly decent crop. Older trees are very inconsistent in the same field and from tree to tree. There is a definite upside to this crop, though it's been hot, sufficient moisture has fallen in many locations to achieve well-sized pecans. Should timely rains continue through September, the crops quality will be far superior to the '05 crop.

Growers are beginning to look at the borderline of how much more chemical cost can be justified to finish making '06 crop. Entering into the Weevil season really puts pressure on that decision. It helps to remind ourselves that trees are managed for following years crops.

## Chemical Mowing

NC State University's Weed Management Specialist, Wayne Mitchem spoke about chemical mowing back in June during the Twi-light tour. With non-highway use diesel fuel nearing \$3.00 a gallon, a minute saved in tractor time means dollars still in the pocket to spend for other stuff, like Sevin. It may be a bit too late to do this year, but going forward it is definitely the smart way to help manage the orchard floor. We will be speaking to this specific issue along with other "Smart Moves" during the annual educational program next March. Remember to mark your calendars now for the March 24 Fall Workshop. We look forward to seeing all members there. Any others interested in Pecan Production are welcome to join us.

## Dedicated Pecan Containers

For years the National Pecan Sheller's Association has emphasized the importance of standard-size packaging for pecan growers to use. Recently, they again drew attention to that need. Standard-size packaging differs depending on locations, but for most NC growers, that would mean the standard mesh bags holding 50 lbs of inshell pecans.

As we think more about accumulating loads for major shellers, it would be required that standards be followed. There are a number of suppliers of 50 lb mesh bags. Their names can be found in the publications you receive.

In April, the National Pecan Sheller's Association endorsed a policy on pecan handling and storage that states:

"Beginning with 2006 crop, inshell pecans must be held, shipped, stored and received in pecan-dedicated containers (paper, cardboard, polypropylene, burlap sacks, bags, boxes or totes). Containers that have been used for any purpose other than the transportation and storage of pecans will no longer be accepted".

## Twilight Orchard Tour Photos



Extension agents Gaylon Ambrose and Charlie Tyson enjoying the cook-out (top left)



Ken Sorenson speaks about orchard insects to an attentive audience (top right)



Orchard Transportation and seating provide by Gaylon Ambrose (bottom left)



Wayne Mitchem addresses weed issues in the orchard (bottom right)

## Prices

NCPGA counterparts in the southeast have encouraged NC growers with quality pecans this year, to go the extra mile to finish producing the crop. If predictions hold for the '06 crop, the industry will sustain a reduction from one-third to a half of the '05 crop. The prices paid during '05 discouraged major growers from holding old crop, leaving the carry-over cold storage number at a well manageable level. All this suggest the '06 price struc-

ture should remain strong.

What does this mean for the smaller grower with a few thousand pounds of good stuff and being hundreds of miles to the market willing to pay prices demanded on the national level? NCPGA readily acknowledges that well-intended local buyers exist and should be contacted for prices. NCPGA stands firm that both grower and buyer should know the value of their pecans and be positioned to negotiate a

fair price for both.

NCPGA, as an association, has talked about the practicality and logistics involved in providing an accumulation point to which growers may take crop for pickup by major buyers in South Carolina and beyond. That effort will continue during our next Board meeting. While merits exist in such an arrangement, there are many details to attend to before it becomes a reality. We will continue to work on it.

## Pearce Brothers Gordon and James Built Pecan Cracker

Brothers Gordon and James Pearce, near Bailey in Nash County have put the final tweaks on a pecan cracker capable of cracking 100 lbs. or more an hour. Some of the Pearce's 2005 crop was processed on the late Charles Edwards type cracker and they were well pleased with the quality product returned. Being enterprising guys with a strong savvy toward mechanical things, they ventured into building a Charles Edwards type cracker for themselves and have positioned themselves to build others, if there is a market. Being conscientious about what they were doing, they sought input from NCPGA board members Elbie Powers and Bill Bunn. Without new crop pecans for testing, they obtained '05 crop Pawnees from Elbie which had been carried over in a freezer. First, a bit about the Pawnee, they are a large (40 nut count per lb.) pecan, relatively soft-shelled, and normally high in

oil content. A 55- 60 percent nut-meat shell out is expected from the Pawnee variety. Prior to testing the cracker, the pecans were hand-sorted to process consistent size pecans. The pecan sample was divided providing for a test without boiling and following a 5 minute-boiling process. Following two tests of the non-steamed pecans, the Pearce's reported a 50 and 55 percent shell out of pure halves, the others being highly useable broken or chipped. On the steamed pecans, they reported a high 80 percent shell out of solid halves, the remainder slightly chipped, but still a very useable product. A sample of the steamed pecans were processed through a Thomson sheller demonstrating an excellent separation of nut meat from shells with very little mechanical injury. Gordon Pearce, on a later sampling, reported a shell-out of 80% plus on Stuarts from the '05 crop. To

provide an editors comment, it is felt that the cracker will do equally as well on the Desirable, Sumner, and a decent job on Cape Fears. The thicker-shell varieties such as Stuart, Gloria Grande and many seedlings may not register as high a shell out of pure halves. The most important issue for this machine is the same as for the Myers or Champion crackers and that is processing consistent size pecans. While some officers in the Association have provided requested input, NCPGA does not underwrite the effectiveness of the cracker. From every indication it is a successful clone of the Charles Edwards type pecan cracker. Also, the Pearce's appear to be decent, honorable and hard working guys and who will not misrepresent their product. To learn more about the machine, its capability and its availability, Gordon Pearce's cell phone number is 252-230-0224.

(See Photos of cracker back page)

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Growers Association**

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**Today's guiding  
light:**

**"It is not how  
long the candle  
burns, but how  
brightly it burns  
while lit..."**

**Author unknown**



Pearce Brothers Cracker



Gordon Pearce (right) and  
James Pearce (left)