

# Nutty News



North Carolina Pecan  
Growers Association

## September 2004

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### Revised Website

[www.ncpecans.org](http://www.ncpecans.org)

The updated website of the NC Pecan Growers Association is available now at [www.ncpecans.org](http://www.ncpecans.org). The website was created with Jim Haskins, of ABC Communications, Carrboro, NC as part of a USDA federally funded grant. The grant funding is administered by NCDA and supports specialty crops in NC.

In order to qualify for the grant, NCPGA committed to 30% matching funds. An amount of up to \$8,000 was awarded to NCPGA. In order to receive all of these funds NCPGA must dedicate \$2,400 to the project for promotion and marketing.

The major project funded by the grant was the development of lesson plans targeting children up to 7 or 8 years of age (K-3). The lesson plans, prepared by ABC Communications, are in compliance with NC Department of Education requirements for students in that age group. A mailing was sent to 2,100 public, private and home schoolteachers throughout the state advising them of the available lesson plans and encouraging their use in daily classroom activities.

Our members can feel a sense of accomplishment in that NCPGA is the only pecan association

in the country with extensive pecan educational materials available for students. NCPGA will encourage other state pecan associations to access our website and use this valuable educational tool in their respective school systems. As part of this process, NCPGA will obtain proprietary rights to all materials and ask other users to give credit to the NC Pecan Growers Association when using this information.

Acknowledgements for tremendous insights and valued input during the projects creation goes not only to ABC Communications, but also to NCPGA Educational Advisor, Mike Parker, and NCDA & CS Marketing Specialist, Laurie Wood for giving of their time, energies and expertise throughout the process.

### Pecan Harvest Festival

The NCPGA is indeed pleased to partner again with the Whiteville Downtown Development Commission in sponsoring the second annual NC Pecan Harvest Festival. The Festival will be held on Saturday November 6, 2004 in Whiteville, NC.

Preceding the Festival will be educational programs on Thursday, November 4 and Friday, November 5. These sessions will target 2<sup>nd</sup> grade students of Columbus and surrounding counties.

Supported by a strong cast of trained and experienced colleagues, the educational programs will be coordinated by Allan Thornton, Extension Associate in Sampson County. Attending students will benefit from planned sessions featuring the history of pecans, health benefits from pecan consumption, growing and marketing pecans, displays of pecan crackers and educational materials. Expected to be of significant interest will be mechanical pecan tree shakers, pecan harvesters and cracking and shelling equipment being demonstrated for the children.

During the festival, NCPGA members will staff a large exhibit near the center of festival activities. Plans for that area are to have pecan related educational material, grafting demonstrations, an “ask the experts” area and pecans for sale to benefit NCPGA. We also hope to have homemade butter pecan ice cream.

Participation in the Pecan Harvest Festival is an excellent opportunity to adhere to our organizational mission statement:

**“To promote and provide educational and research opportunities in all phases of the pecan industry.”**

All NCPGA members are strongly encouraged to be a part of the festival activities. We need volunteers to assist with all phases of our involvement. Interested volunteers please contact Bill Bunn (919) 815-5764 or Laurie Wood (910) 532-4208. This is a big project and takes much work and time to accomplish success. Your help and participation will be greatly appreciated.

The 2003 Festival, though a huge success, resulted from the efforts of only a few members. In order for NCPGA to take full advantage of this excellent opportunity to promote our commodity, additional member support is a must.



**Taking a break from planning for the pecan harvest festival: Left to right are: Allan Thornton, Suzanne King, Harry Warren and Bill Bunn.**

## Spring Workshop 2005

Plans are beginning to come together for the 11<sup>th</sup> Annual Spring Workshop to be held on Saturday, February 26, 2005.

**PLEASE NOTE:** This is a different date from the date published in the June newsletter. This change resulted from scheduling conflicts.

A study of NCPGA membership history, from inception to this date, clearly shows that Sampson and the immediately surrounding counties as the center of interest in pecan production in our state.

Accordingly, the board has agreed to return to the Agri-Expo center in Clinton. There is a long list of potential topics that we are working from to prepare the program agenda. We plan to have a quality program with something of interest to all pecan enthusiasts.

As in the past, the program will conclude in a demonstration orchard

to provide hands on opportunities and observations of topics discussed in the workshop.

## Crop Outlook

The timing of this newsletter leaves its creator searching for positives about the upcoming harvest. The unseasonably wet late summer has caused the dreaded scab to form where it has never been seen before, even on hickory and oak trees. Seriously, take a look if you have doubts. The fairly good crop of Cape Fear is now heavily infected with scab although many have proclaimed that Cape Fear does not get scab in NC. Strange as it may seem, Desirables, the variety identified as most susceptible to scab problems, is the variety most free of scab. Now that is a story for another day.



**Twelve inches of rain in 10 days, with 6 of those days being cloudy, leaves the trusted Cape Fear variety severely affected with scab. With orchards too wet to get into and rains too frequent for maximum spray applications, we are left to just hope for the best under these uncontrollable circumstances.**

In every orchard observed, the Stuart variety is taking the year off, even in young and aggressively managed orchards. The hoped for crop did not occur. There is recollection of some legitimate experts that the weak 2004 crop of Stuart could be charged, in part, to

the relatively wet and cool summer of 2003. Now, with two consecutive years of relatively wet and cool summer months, what can be expected for the 2005 crop?

There remains an absolute truth. Tree fruit crops are managed in expectation of the subsequent year's crop. With that mind-set, growers are encouraged to continue spray programs, nutritional and herbicide applications with the knowledge that the 2005 crop will benefit from efforts made this year.

Not that this news is any consolation, but the Stuart crop in much of the entire southeastern United States is reported to be consistent with what we are experiencing.

## **NAP Insurance Signup**

Signup for the federally funded NAP (Non-insured Assistance Program) for the 2005 crop year is currently underway and must be done by late November. Please confirm with your FSA office the exact deadline.

This federally funded insurance program has been of benefit to several NCPGA members digging out from catastrophic losses from major storms. The coverage has included cost of orchard cleanup and crop losses based on established formulas. Under some circumstances, cost of tree replacement is also covered.

Given our vulnerability to tropical storms, the history we have accumulated and the absolute certainty that our future includes additional hurricanes, it is suggested that strong consideration be given to signing up for this relatively inexpensive insurance coverage.

## **Nursery Stock Status**

It now appears that there will be a comfortable supply of bare-root nursery stock of pecan trees for North Carolina growers. Mr. Alton Woodard, Woodard Pecan Nursery has shared that he will be receiving fewer trees this year than last, but with some carryover in containers, he should have ample supplies.

On a larger scale, it has been reported that there will be a shortage of trees throughout the Southeast. It is suggested that purchases should be made as quickly as possible and that trees be adequately cared for until planting time. Additionally, if varieties are needed from out-of-state nurseries, prompt action is suggested.

## **State Fairs**

With the fall of the year upon us, it is time for the state fairs and the numerous county fairs throughout North Carolina.

NCPGA will again provide display and educational materials in the poplar Horticulture Section at the North Carolina State Fair in Raleigh. Because of active NCPGA participation, the number of pecan entries submitted for judging in the commodity quality competition has increased from perhaps a half-dozen to nearly 50 entries during the 2003 State Fair. It is indeed pleasing to see that many trays of pecans adorned with award winning ribbons.

Also, cash prizes will be provided to support a NC Pecan Growers Association sponsored pecan recipe contest scheduled for November 19<sup>th</sup> at the fair.

County agricultural fairs may be another opportunity to educate the public and promote pecans. NCPGA members are encouraged to consider becoming active in their local counties. County fairs are an excellent forum to promote agriculture and to proudly display pecans and other crops grown on your own farm.

## **Timely To Do List**

- ☞ Prepare orchard floor for harvest
- ☞ Service harvesting equipment
- ☞ Consider fall fertilization
- ☞ Apply lime as needed
- ☞ Communicate with established customers
- ☞ Develop marketing emphasis
- ☞ Finalize plans for orchard expansion
- ☞ Schedule participation in workshops
- ☞ Review status of pesticide applicator license



**A Scene from the  
1<sup>st</sup> Annual Pecan Festival Recipe Contest  
November 2003  
COME JOIN US NOVEMBER 6, 2004**