



# New pecan orchard establishment cost & approach

# Success



- Appropriate site & natural resources
- Robust planting stock--trees
- Attention to details: planting & early protection
- Train 275
- Push-Push-Patience
- Live the literature

# Site Selection





Stock Scion Space

# Variety Matters



Known: Kanza, Elliott, Caddo

Flawed: Lakota, Mandan, Lipan

Risky: Avalon (UGA), Seneca (USDA)

Overlooked: Fayette, Creek



# In Texas, the Spacing debate is:

30 x 30 vs. 35 x 35 vs 50 x 50

|                   | 1st 10-year yield<br>(lbs/Acre) | Revenue<br>(\$1.85/lb) | Tree<br>Cost/Acre | Net 10 yr above<br>tree cost (\$/Ac) |
|-------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------|-------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 50 x 50 17<br>TPA | 865                             | \$ 1,600               | \$ 1,400          | \$200                                |
| 35 x 35 35<br>TPA | 1,780                           | \$ 3,293               | \$ 1,400          | \$1,893                              |
| 30 x 30<br>48 TPA | 2,441                           | \$ 4,516               | \$ 1,824          | \$2,692                              |



25 x 50=35 TPA





Planting Details



Protection Details



Young pecan trees can/should be pruned 275 days-during active growth and dormancy (not 9/15 to 12/15)

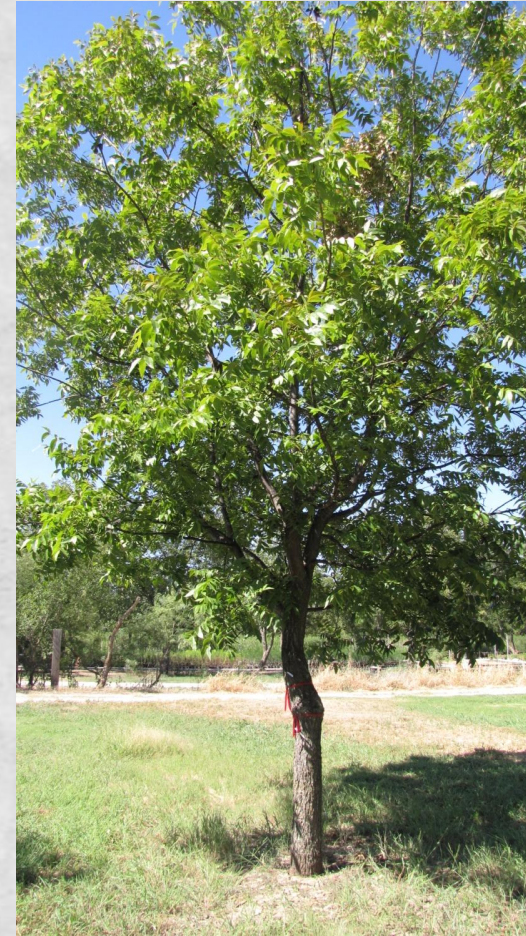




1-2 year old: Limb Spread 1.5 ft.



4-5 year old: Limb Spread 6-8 ft.



7-8 year old: Limb Spread 10-12 ft.

# N=Fuel

| Year | Yield | Price   |
|------|-------|---------|
| 1    | 0     | \$ 0.00 |
| 2    | 0     | \$ 0.00 |
| 3    | 0     | \$ 0.00 |
| 4    | 0     | \$ 0.00 |
| 5    | 0     | \$ 0.00 |
| 6    | 0     | \$ 0.00 |
| 7    | 0     | \$ 0.00 |



**Department of Agricultural  
and Applied Economics**  
College of Agricultural & Environmental Sciences  
**UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA**

Nitrogen delivery rates for first year trees are typically ½ pound of ammonium sulfate (0.1 lb actual N) total. Or 1.0 pound 10-10-10 or 13-13-13. First application not before May of planting year and not later than August 15.

Second and third-year trees can receive from 0.25 to 0.40 lbs actual N per tree per year.

Fourth –seventh year trees: target rate of 0.60 to 1.25 lbs actual N per tree per year.

# How much weed free area do you need?

3 feet

7 feet

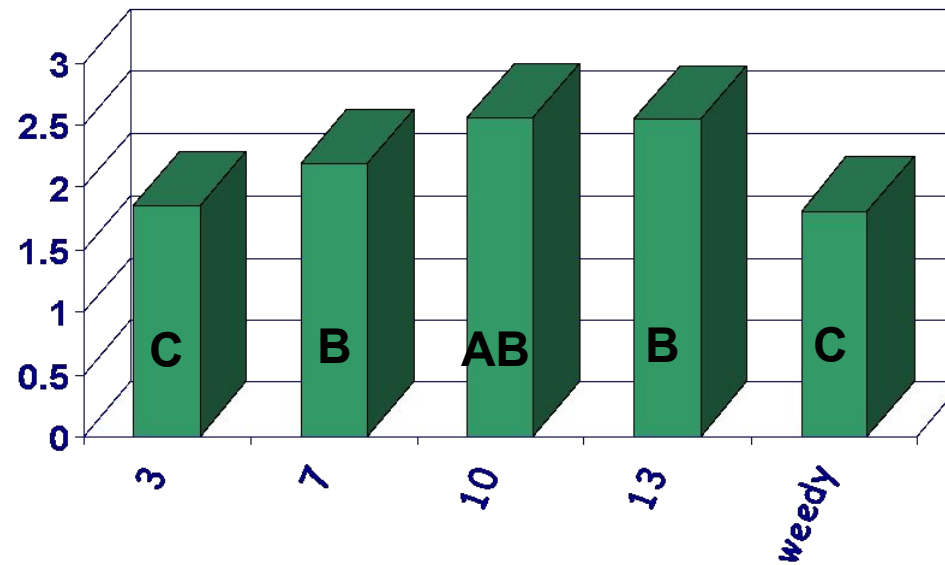
10 feet

13 feet

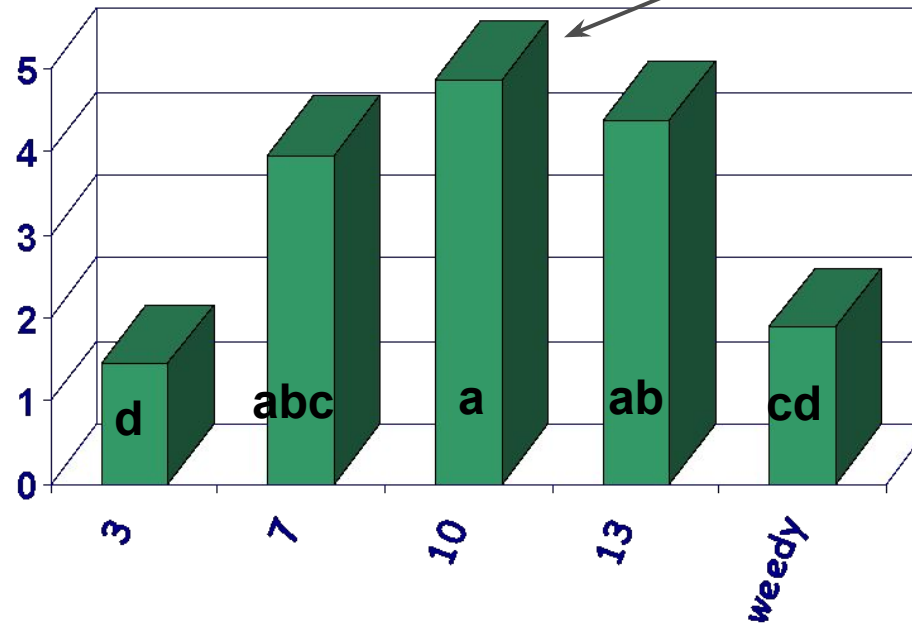


**1998 Weed Study, Auburn Univ.; Desirable**

# Trunk Growth: 1998-2002



# Yield 2001, 4<sup>th</sup> leaf



150 lbs/Acre

Mulch slows soil moisture evaporation, reduces weed emergence, lowers root temperature: a **win-win-win** for plants and the grower!

**Studies in Literature** on young pecan trees demonstrated 36-60% increase in trunk caliper over weed control area, depending on area mulched.



Minimum of 5 ft x 5 ft, 5 inches deep

# Pecan Operating Budgets-not establishment

| Source       | Year | Annual<br>Operating Cost                  | Fixed-Overhe<br>ad Cost | Yield-Price                 | Net per Acre    |
|--------------|------|-------------------------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------|
| OK State     | 2023 | \$1,391.40                                | \$631.75                | 1,000 x \$2.25 (\$2,250)    | <b>\$226.85</b> |
| NMSU         | 2024 | \$2,256.00<br>(\$1,100 custom<br>harvest) | \$445.00                | 2,000 x \$1.76 (\$3,520)    | <b>\$819.00</b> |
| UGA          | 2025 | \$1,596.41                                | \$971.25                | 1,412 x \$2.28 (\$3,222.27) | <b>\$654.61</b> |
| AgriLife-D10 | 2024 | \$1,131.17                                | \$611.21                | 950 x \$2.00 (\$1,900)      | <b>\$157.62</b> |

15 Pecan production is an economically successful agricultural business today-42% disagree  
Pecan production was more economically successful in the past than it is today-60.4%  
Agree

# Pecan Establishment Budgets

| Source           | Year | Tree<br>cost/acre    | Year 1                              | Year 2                          | Year 3                          | Year 4                          | Year 5                          | Year 6                          | Year 7                          | Sum                  |
|------------------|------|----------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------|
| UGA              | 2025 | \$540<br>(27 x \$20) | \$1,658<br>\$1,301<br>(\$2,959)     | \$1,138<br>\$1,223<br>(\$2,361) | \$1,138<br>\$1,223<br>(\$2,361) | \$1,138<br>\$1,223<br>(\$2,361) | \$1,286<br>\$1,245<br>(\$2,531) | \$1,286<br>\$1,245<br>(\$2,531) | \$1,286<br>\$1,245<br>(\$2,531) | <b>\$17,637/Acre</b> |
| AgriLife-<br>D10 | 2015 | \$984<br>(41 x \$24) | \$1,654.64<br>\$234.19<br>(\$1,990) | \$549<br>\$234<br>(\$783)       | \$556<br>\$234<br>(\$790)       | \$563<br>\$234<br>(\$797)       | \$696<br>\$234<br>(\$930)       | \$687<br>\$234<br>(\$921)       | \$696<br>\$278<br>(\$974)       | <b>\$7,189/Acre</b>  |

[https://agecon.uga.edu/content/dam/caes-subsite/ag-econ/documents/extension/budgets/2025-budgets/2025\\_Georgia\\_Pecan\\_Budget%20.xls](https://agecon.uga.edu/content/dam/caes-subsite/ag-econ/documents/extension/budgets/2025-budgets/2025_Georgia_Pecan_Budget%20.xls)

<https://agecoext.tamu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/2015D-10PecanEstablishmentDevelopment.xlsx>

# Key Establishment Comps



Tree Cost---Median price in Texas (grafted)=\$38.00 each 6-7ft

Irrigation System: Drip, poly laterals=\$750/Acre

Farm Labor in Texas: \$13.65-\$16.76, Median=\$14.50/hr

# Pecan Establishment Budgets

| Source                 | Year | Tree<br>cost/acre      | Year 1                          | Year 2                          | Year 3                          | Year 4                          | Year 5                          | Year 6                          | Year 7                          | Sum                  |
|------------------------|------|------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------|
| UGA                    | 2025 | \$540<br>(27 x \$20)   | \$1,658<br>\$1,301<br>(\$2,959) | \$1,138<br>\$1,223<br>(\$2,361) | \$1,138<br>\$1,223<br>(\$2,361) | \$1,138<br>\$1,223<br>(\$2,361) | \$1,286<br>\$1,245<br>(\$2,531) | \$1,286<br>\$1,245<br>(\$2,531) | \$1,286<br>\$1,245<br>(\$2,531) | <b>\$17,637/Acre</b> |
| TAMU<br>(UGA-Modified) | 2025 | \$1,330<br>(35 x \$38) | \$2,310<br>\$1,464<br>(\$3,775) | \$797<br>\$1,237<br>(\$2,034)   | \$797<br>\$1,237<br>(\$2,034)   | \$797<br>\$1,237<br>(\$2,034)   | \$936<br>\$1,258<br>(\$2,194)   | \$936<br>\$1,258<br>(\$2,194)   | \$936<br>\$1,258<br>(\$2,194)   | <b>\$16,459/Acre</b> |

Modifications to  
UGA Budget

Eliminate soil zinc  
 Eliminate soil limestone  
 Adjust tree cost up  
 Increase Zinc foliar applications  
 Labor at \$14.50  
 Adjust fixed and annual irrigation costs  
 Lower interest rate to prime  
 Fuel to 2.85  
 Fewer fungicides in Years 2-7  
 Fewer herbicides in years 2-4, more in 5-7



# ROI-Recapture Time

| If Market Price is: | Average Yield is:<br>1400 lbs/Ac | Average Yield is:<br>2000 lbs/Ac |
|---------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
|                     | Recapture/Break-Even is:         |                                  |
| \$2.00              | Year 51                          | Year 18                          |
| \$2.50              | Year 23                          | Year 14                          |
| \$3.50              | Year 14                          | Year 11                          |
| \$10.00             | Year 9                           | Year 8                           |

Lengthy establishment time without nut production is hard to overcome.

Must push to shorten time, but have a marketing plan that increases crop value.

# Texas Pecan Short Course

## Feb 24-27, 2026



<http://agriliferegister.tamu.edu/>

Monte Nesbitt 979-321-7028 Monte.Nesbitt@ag.tamu.edu