



## PECANS

Pecan trees are native to North America, and their history can be traced back to the 16th century. These native trees were wild trees that grew along rivers, lakes, or any large source of water. Pecan is a Native American word from the Algonquin tribe meaning “nut requiring a stone to crack.” Because pecans were close at hand, many tribes used wild pecans as a major food source. It is believed that the Native Americans were the first to cultivate pecan trees. Not only did the Native American tribes eat the pecans, they also used the wood to make bows and made oil by boiling pecan pieces in water and straining the mixture.

Through trade, pecans became very popular in the US and throughout the world. In the 1770s, pecans even made their way to George Washington and Thomas Jefferson, who both planted pecan trees on their plantations. The trees are still standing today! It wasn't until the late 1800s that farmers began cultivating pecans in orchards.

Today, pecans are grown in 15 states in the southern United States including Alabama, Arkansas, Arizona, California, Florida, Georgia, Kansas, Louisiana, Missouri, Mississippi, North Carolina, New Mexico, Oklahoma, South Carolina, and Texas. Georgia, New Mexico, and Texas are the top pecan-producing states. The U.S. is the world's leading producer of pecans, producing about 80% of the world's pecan supply.

It takes 7 years for the pecan trees to grow and start producing nuts. During those 7 years, farmers must continually water and take care of the trees. Pecan farmers must invest a lot of money before any money comes back to their farm. Once an orchard is established, farmers must keep them in good condition. Just like humans need nutrients and minerals to live, so do pecan trees. Farmers spray the trees to keep away bugs and disease. If the trees are lacking in any nutrients, farmers will spray those nutrients onto the leaves so the tree can absorb them at once.

### COLOR THE STATES WHERE PECANS ARE GROWN



### CIRCLE THE RIGHT ANSWER

- What state is the nation's largest supplier of pecans?  
a. New Mexico b. Georgia c. Texas d. Florida
- Dr. Lenny Wells conducts research on growing peanuts.  
a. True b. False
- What Georgia county is part of the area known as the “Pecan Capital of the World?”  
a. Lowndes b. Tift c. Dougherty d. Wilcox
- Cason Anderson farms around \_\_\_\_\_ acres of pecans.  
a. 500 b. 750 c. 1,000 d. 1,500
- Pecan is a Native American word from the Algonquin tribe meaning “nut requiring a stone to crack.”  
a. True b. False

### PECAN FACTS

- Georgia is the nation's largest supplier of pecans, accounting for about a third of all U.S. pecan production.
- An average pecan harvest in Georgia is about 100 million pounds-enough to make around 200 million pecan pies.
- There are more than 140,000 acres of pecans in Georgia.
- Most production in Georgia is centered in Albany, located in Dougherty County. That area is known as the “Pecan Capital of the World.”
- In 2021 Governor Brian Kemp signed into law a bill designating the pecan as the official state nut of Georgia.

### PECAN CREAM PIE DIP

#### SUPPLIES & INGREDIENTS

- 14 oz. can sweetened condensed milk
- 1 cup cold milk
- 2 - 3.4 oz. boxes instant vanilla pudding mix
- 2 1/2 cups chopped toasted pecans
- 8 oz. container Cool Whip, thawed
- Graham Cracker Cookies

#### DIRECTIONS

- In a large bowl, whisk together sweetened condensed milk, milk, dry pudding mix, and toasted pecans.
- Fold in whipped topping.
- Use graham cracker cookies to scoop up the dip and enjoy!



## DR. LENNY WELLS

Professor and Extension Specialist for Pecans | Tifton, Georgia (Tift County)

**HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN IN PECAN PRODUCTION?** I started in 2002, so over 20 years.

**PLEASE EXPLAIN YOUR JOB.**

I conduct research on growing pecans and share this information with pecan growers and county extension agents. Most of that research is related to helping farmers fertilize and irrigate pecan orchards more efficiently and helping them to grow more pecans while spending less money. I train county extension agents and advise pecan farmers on all aspects of pecan production including fertilization, irrigation, insect and disease control, variety selection, orchard design, how to prune trees, etc. I also help pecan growers solve problems in their orchards, which may include diagnosing sick and dying or poorly performing trees.

**WHAT IS THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE WITH YOUR JOB?**

The biggest challenge to my job is time management, especially when trying to balance the research and extension sides of my job.

**WHAT DO YOU LIKE BEST ABOUT YOUR JOB?**

There are two great things about this job. 1) I enjoy learning how the natural world works and how we as human beings can use the way pecan trees experience the world to learn to grow pecans more responsibly. 2) I get to work with a lot of great people, including Georgia's pecan farmers, other UGA scientists and extension agents, as well as other pecan scientists and farmers from all over the world.

**WHAT SUBJECTS IN SCHOOL HAVE HELPED YOU THE MOST IN YOUR JOB?**

Biology, Plant Science, Ecology, and Statistics classes taught me things I still use every day.



Scan the QR code or visit [gfb.ag/wells](http://gfb.ag/wells) to watch an interview with Dr. Wells.



## CASON ANDERSON

Owner/Operator | CCA Pecan | Perry, Georgia (Houston County)

**HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN IN PECAN PRODUCTION?**

I have been farming pecans on my own since 2012 when I graduated high school. I helped my mentor harvest pecans in 2011. He had a pecan tree shaker and some small orchards that he maintained in his retirement.

**TELL US ABOUT YOUR FARM/OPERATION.**

We farm around 1,000 acres of pecans in Houston, Peach, Macon and Pulaski counties. I own one farm in Montezuma, the rest is rented and leased. My crew of 3 to 4 people and I do all the growing, management and harvesting of pecans.

**WHAT IS INVOLVED IN GROWING PECANS?**

Pecans need to be cared for like any crop or animal. They need to be planted, trimmed, and checked for insects and airborne diseases. We are constantly pruning young and old trees to increase the sunlight they receive and have desired tree branch structure. We spray trees in the summer when it rains a lot so mold and disease does not ruin the crop. We apply fertilizer once or twice a year to the soil and can spray it on the leaves. Once Halloween arrives we are busy gathering the pecans to sell!

**WHAT SUBJECTS IN SCHOOL HAVE HELPED YOU THE MOST AS A PRODUCER?**

I honestly believe every subject in school made me a better farmer. Of course we need to know math well when figuring how many ounces of this and that are applied per acre. The periodic table is helpful to know for fertilizer, Pythagorean theorem allows you to square up tree rows when you are planting or how to build a barn the right way! Spanish is very important in agriculture so you are able to be respectful and communicate with everyone you encounter. Money management and accounting formulas are also very helpful. Knowledge is useless without a kind personality, and a great personality is no good without knowledge.

**WHAT DO YOU LIKE BEST ABOUT BEING A FARMER?**

I love working on the land, it is a noble and fulfilling profession. I enjoy being able to physically turn around and see progress my crew and I have accomplished in the fields, whether it is mowing tall grass, planting trees or harvesting pecans. My favorite thing is seeing multiple people and machines working together in tandem in an orchard.



Scan the QR code or visit [gfb.ag/pecanfarmer](http://gfb.ag/pecanfarmer) to learn more about Cason Anderson.