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### How to Select and Plant Pecan Trees

Selecting pecan trees is very important when you are trying to decide what to put in the yard. You must consider how much management can be given to the tree and how much disease resistance the tree has. Therefore, four varieties that are recommended for homeowners are Elliott, Curtis, Stuart and Farley varieties.

You should select trees from a reputable nursery and be sure the tree is alive. This is important because many times package trees are allowed to dry out or suffer cold damage. Scrape the bark slightly, and if green appears the tree is healthy and alive.

Before planting make sure they are protected from freezing and have adequate moisture. As a homeowner you may want to put them in the garage and keep them moist until ready to plant.

Pecan trees can be planted anytime during the dormant season from December through early March. January-February is normally the preferred time to plant trees.

You should select a good site that is well drained and away from power lines and buildings. The pecan tree must have ample room to grow because it will make an extremely large tree. It should be at least 60 feet away from the other trees and structures.

Dig a hole at least 24 inches wide at the top and from two to four feet deep. It is a good idea to soak the root system prior to planting. Examine the root system and prune off all broken or injured roots, at the tap root and side root to make it fit the hole. Never twist the roots in the hole because it will injure the root system.

Plant the tree at the same depth that it grew in the nursery. Fill the hole about 1/3 to 1/2 full of top soil and water to settle the soil and eliminate air pockets. Repeat the process, adding top soil until the tree is planted at the same depth that it grew in the nursery.

The trees should be watered at least once a week during the growing season the first two years it is planted. At least 5 to 10 gallons of water are needed each week unless a one-inch rain is received. Probably more trees die from lack of water during the first two years than from any other cause.

Normally, a soil test is taken and the tree is fertilized according to soil test result. If fertilizer is applied, it should be spread over a 25 square foot area. Never fertilize heavily in the area where the tree is planted. This will cause root injury as the fertilizer is washed down to the root system.

A good mulch around the tree will help conserve moisture and also keep weeds down. Good materials to use are old rotted sawdust and pine straw.

For more information on pecan production or other subjects you can call me at the Twiggs County Extension Office at 945-3391.