

### Off-Year Crop Smallest Ever

Locally grown pecans will be scarce this year with the smallest crop in 17 years in prospect. To blame are last spring's unfavorable weather and the two-year cyclical nature of pecan production.

Suspected as a contributing factor is the failure of many tree owners to fertilize regularly.

The current Tar Heel pecan crop is forecast at only 600,000 pounds, the smallest since 1955 and the second smallest since 1925.

Compared to last year's North Carolina production of a bountiful 6.5 million pounds, this year's output borders on crop failure.

The 1971 crop was a state record. Mel Kobe, horticultural specialist at North Carolina State University, pointed out that trees tend to produce light crops on alternate years, especially if they aren't fertilized regularly. With the big '71 crop, this year's production would have been down somewhat but not nearly as low as current forecasts indicate had growing conditions been more favorable.

Cold, rainy weather at pollination time was the No. 2 factor this year, Kobe believes. Both cold temperatures and rain hinder pecan pollination. Last spring's weather brought both — plus a late frost.

Other production factors include generally poor tree condition going into last winter, and diseases, particularly scab. The alternate good-one-year-poor-the-next bearing pattern of pecan trees is usually what puzzles most people, Kobe explained.

When the tree blooms, the male bloom comes on last year's wood while the female bloom comes on the new wood. This is evidenced by the cluster of pecans on the very tips of the branches.

If for any reason the male blooms are out and the female blooms aren't, there is no chance of pollination. The weather and the general condition of the tree are two factors that can affect pollination.

Kobe suggests that growers don't fertilize their trees as they should to help assure better annual production. The rule of thumb for pecan trees is three pounds of fertilizer, such as 10-10-10, for every one inch of tree diameter measured one foot above the ground. For example, a 10-inch tree would receive 30 pounds of fertilizer. This should be divided equally into two applications. The first should be applied before buds open and the other half when the male blooms are showing.

The fertilizer can be placed in a circle around the tree about the same distance from the trunk as the outer branches—the drip line, in other words.

If the tree is in a yard and there is danger of the fertilizer burning the grass, the fertilizer can be put in small holes punched in the ground near the tree's drip line.

Fertilizer should be applied annually.

#### STAIN SHIELDS

Spray-on stain repellents have to "warm up" to their job after a garment had been laundered, note extension home economists specialists, North Carolina State University. The repellent "hides" in spaces in the fabric when washed. But, if you put the garment in the dryer, or iron it, the stain shield will re-coat the fibers.

#### NOT SIMILAR

Despite the similarity in names, acetate and triacetate are two very different fibers. Acetate is sometimes called a "problem" fiber, because it is "weak" and generally not machine washable. Check the label when you buy acetate, to see if "dry-clean only" is recommended, advise extension clothing specialists, North Carolina State University. Triacetate is washable, however. It can be ironed at a higher temperature than acetate, also.

#### NON-FOOD MONEY

As much as thirty-eight cents of every dollar you spend from the "food" budget may be spent for non-food items, reminds Mrs. Ruby Uzzle, extension consumer marketing economist, North Carolina State University.

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