

The Pecan Grower

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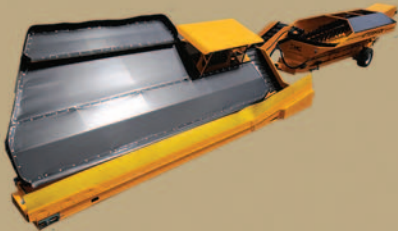


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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

June 2026

- **June 4-6, 2026**
Oklahoma Pecan Growers Conference
Madill, OK
More information at okpecangrowers.org

- **June 11, 2026**
USDA-ARS Engagement Day
Byron, GA
RSVP to David.Shapiro@usda.gov

- **June 18-19, 2026**
TriState ArkLaMiss Pecanference
Alexandria, LA

July 2026

- **July 12-15, 2026**
Texas Pecan Growers Conference
San Marcos, TX
More information at www.tpga.org
- **July 29, 2026**
American Pecan Promotion Board &
American Pecan Council's Board Meetings
Irving, TX

August 2026

- **August 19-20, 2026**
UGA Pecan Workshop
Athens, GA
- **August 27-28, 2026**
Arizona Pecan Growers Conference
Tucson, AZ

September 2026

- **September 3, 2026**
GPGA Fall Field Day
Southern Hill Orchards
Albany, GA
More information at georgiapecan.org
- **September 9-10, 2026**
NPSA Annual Meeting
Hotel Paseo Del Norte
El Paso, TX
More information at ilovepecans.org
- **September 16-17, 2026**
Alabama Pecan Growers Conference
Robertsdale, AL

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GEORGIA PECAN GROWERS ASSOCIATION

220 E 2nd Street, Suite A | P. O. Box 1367
Tifton, GA. 31793
Phone: 229-382-2187 | Fax: 404-393-9298
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GPGA STAFF

Executive Director | Editor | Advertising

Mary Mikelyn Bruorton • mary@georgiapecan.org

Grants Coordinator | Copy Editor

Amy Howell • amy@georgiapecan.org

Finance

Sheila Harnage • sheila@georgiapecan.org

Communications & Events Coordinator

Scout Weesner • scout@georgiapecan.org

Contributing Writers

Dr. Cameron Bardsley	Amy Howell
Dr. Apurba Barman	Robert L. Redding, Jr.
Dr. Clemen Oliveira	Sumit Saran
Dr. Lenny Wells	Andrew Sawyer
Rajendra Acharya	Anne Warden
Mary Mikelyn Bruorton	Scout Weesner
Kaicie Chasteen	Johanna Wesche

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Greetings!

It's been an incredibly active and exciting stretch for GPGA and the pecan industry. Over the past few months, we hosted our 61st Annual Conference, welcomed eight Indian food influencers for a unique international collaboration, and wrapped up National Pecan Month with our annual National Pecan Federation Fly-In in Washington, D.C.



While May brought a slightly slower pace, the momentum continued. East Georgia held its annual Field Day in Wrens, and we reached the deadline for the Hurricane Helene Block Grant—both important moments for our growers and industry.

I want to extend a sincere thank you to all of our sponsors, exhibitors, and attendees who helped make this year's conference such a success. Your support and participation are what make events like this possible.

In this issue of *The Pecan Grower*, you'll find valuable updates on GPGA's ongoing efforts to advocate for growers and strengthen the industry, along with the latest research insights from UGA and USDA.

As we move forward into the growing season, we wish each of you continued success. And as always, GPGA is here to support you whenever you need us. 🌰

Mary Mikelyn Bruorton



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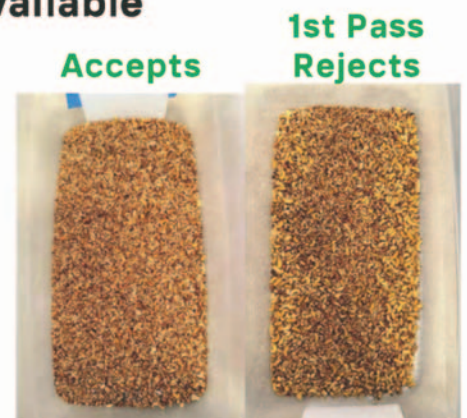
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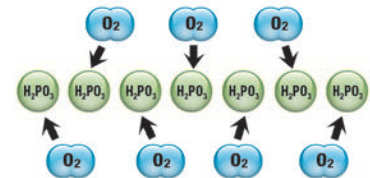
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EXPERT ADVICE

with Dr. Lenny Wells

Extension Horticulturist, University of Georgia

Mid Season Pecan Report

Two years post-Hurricane Helene, I find myself cautiously optimistic as the second year following a major hurricane has historically tended to produce a relatively strong pecan crop. From conversations with growers and from my own observations in orchards around the state, I would say that trend is holding up right now. In most orchards where the crop appears a little on the light side, there was a fairly heavy 2025 crop, so it shouldn't be too surprising that they are lighter this year. Our spring conditions were the driest we've had in decades. Since most of our orchards are irrigated, that should not have posed problems and in fact, may have helped since it reduced early-season scab pressure and provided better pollination conditions than we've seen in a while.

Mouse ear has been prevalent this year, which I think reflects the dry soil conditions early in the season. Pecans don't need a lot of nickel, but anything that limits root uptake of nickel during the budbreak period can contribute to mouse ear symptom expression. Thus, nickel sprays were required in a number of orchards. Keep in mind that certain trees in an orchard often tend to have reoccurring symptoms from one year to the next and it can often take multiple years of spraying to get them out of it. In some cases, such trees may always have an issue with nickel uptake but foliar sprays are the only solution, even when it is a temporary one.

June brings with it the dreaded "June drop" in which pecan trees shed some of the developing nuts. It's never safe to get too excited about the crop prior to this event, especially for cultivars like 'Desirable' that can shed 40-60% of their fruit during this time. Also known as the second drop, the June drop occurs within 45 days of pollination and coincides with the shedding of non-pollinated flowers, which leads to unsuccessful fertilization of the egg that will become the pecan embryo. Hopefully, given our pollination conditions, we won't see a big drop this year. However, bear in mind that when there is a heavy crop on the trees, the drop often appears magnified because they started with

Continued on Page 10, See Report



Report Continued from Page 9

so many. Try to focus on what you see remaining in the trees rather than what is on the ground.

From this point forward, the focus will be on nut scab, which means your fungicide program needs to be shifting from a reliance on phosphite to a reliance on a rotation between Dodine/Tin® and Miravis Top®. These are the best materials for nut scab and provide maximum protection. However, they will only continue to do so if we are good stewards of this chemistry. Rotation of these chemistries is the key to preserving them. Do not spray any one of these materials back to back. Always rotate them. Do not use Miravis Top® more than 3 times per season. If you substitute Miravis Prime® for one of your Miravis Top® sprays, just count it as a Miravis Top® for rotation purposes.

Dr. Clemen Oliveira's lab at UGA can test the scab in your orchard for resistance to the fungicides used in pecan if you suspect resistance may be an issue. These tests are laborious and costly for the lab to run, so there is a \$200 fee with these samples. You shouldn't test your orchard just for the heck of it. However, if you are on a good schedule and are getting good fungicide coverage but still see some scab developing, it would be a good idea to check.

The water demand for pecans has increased with nut set and the onset of nut sizing. However, you do not need to over-water during this period because you don't want the nuts to get so large that they are difficult to fill in the case of dry weather in August/September. For

June, you want to be at about 36% of full capacity for drip and micro-irrigation systems. This means about 4 hours per day on most systems. If possible, water less frequently---maybe every other day, or every third day, with longer watering periods (8 hours every other day as opposed to 4 hours daily). Deeper soakings help to bank soil moisture and help the tree's resilience. However, don't go so long between waterings that the soil dries out completely. Extreme fluctuations between wet and dry lead to tree stress. You want to maintain soil moisture within a given range and that will vary with soil type. Sandier soils (deep sands) will need more frequent irrigation. When July arrives, increase to 45% of full capacity.

June is really when the true pecan season gets started as the nuts begin to size and develop. Management from here on out will go a long way toward determining both what sort of crop you end up with and how much you have in it. Both of these factors, along with the price of pecans, will determine your bottom line at the end of the season. Every grower in Georgia is due for a good year out of our pecans and hopefully we'll get it. 🌰



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National Pecan Federation Washington, D.C. Update

Robert L. Redding, Jr., The Redding Firm

U.S. House of Representatives Passes Farm, Food, and National Security Act of 2026

On April 30, 2026, the United States House of Representatives passed the Farm, Food, and National Security Act of 2026 by a vote of 224- 200. The passage came after a vote out of committee occurred on March 5th, and a lengthy review in the House Rules Committee and debate on the floor of the U.S. House.

Included in the bill were multiple provisions that will benefit the pecan industry:

- Expanding eligibility for the Tree Assistance Program (TAP)
- Adding pecans and other tree nuts as eligible products under the Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program
- Reforms to specialty crop risk management programs

U.S. House of Representatives Subcommittee on Agriculture Appropriations includes

Increased Funding for Pecan Research Projects

On April 22, 2026, the U.S. House Committee on Appropriations Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, And Related Agencies Subcommittee released the 2027 Appropriation Bill report. Included in the report was a \$250,000 funding increase for two pecan Agricultural Research Service (ARS) projects, bringing total fiscal year 2027 funding for both projects to \$5,250,000.

Pecan processing research appropriated a continuation of funding to further the ARS work being done in cooperation with The University of Georgia College of Agriculture and Environmental Science and College of Engineer along with Fort Valley State University College of Agriculture to improve cracking/ shelling technologies and pasteurization methods.

The USDA ARS pecan genetics research project is housed at ARS stations in Byron, Georgia and Brownwood, Texas. This project's focus is to develop new breeds of pecans and it has been very successful with the introduction of multiple new breeds. In 2020, the National Pecan Federation, growers and shellers, submitted the appropriation requests to Congressional appropriators to begin funding for these projects. In the past 5 years, Congress has approved \$22.5 million for each project.

Also included in the Subcommittee Report was language directing the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Agriculture Research Service (ARS) to con-

Continued on Page 14, See Update

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National Pecan Federation FY 2026 Pecan Political Action Committee Goal

**FY 2026 GOAL:
\$300,000**

2026 Goal:
To reach our goals for the PECAN PAC, we are asking every grower to consider including contributions that equate to \$2-per-acre. A small investment from each grower will create a strong, unified voice to protect and advance the future of the pecan industry. PECAN PAC is a critical part of the pecan industry's advocacy efforts.



The National Pecan Federation's advocacy efforts have helped secure for growers in recent years:

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. Hurricane Helene Block Grants to State Departments of Agriculture | 5. TAP Reforms |
| 2. Emergency Relief Program (ERP) | 6. Economic Assistance Programs such as MASC, CFAP 1 & 2 |
| 3. Crop Insurance Improvements | 7. Pandemic Assistance Relief Program (PARP) |
| 4. ECP Improvements | 8. Top Industry Trade Priorities |

What does your Contribution to the Pecan PAC do??

The PECAN PAC allows pecan growers and shellers to join together in support of candidates that support production agriculture at the federal level. The Pecan PAC provides an advocacy tool for the pecan industry to be a vital, unified voice in the political arena. Contributions to the PECAN PAC are an investment in the future of the pecan industry.

How to Give to the Pecan PAC?

To have a successful advocacy program, the pecan industry must have a political action committee. The Pecan PAC can accept contributions from individuals, partnerships, or LLCs. Contributions are limited to \$5000 per person per year. Please send contributions via Check to the address below or by scanning the QR code:

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Update, Continued from Page 12

duct research into difficulties facing pecan growers and to report back to the committee on what research backed tools and innovations pecan growers need to be successful.

NPF Supports Representative Scott's USMCA Review Letter to United States Trade Representative Jamieson Greer

U.S. House of Representative Member Austin Scott from Georgia's 8th district, along with 78 of his colleagues, have signed and sent a bipartisan letter to United States Trade Representative Jamieson Greer calling his attention to the amount of specialty crop imports entering the United States from Mexico. The National Pecan Federation along with the Georgia Pecan Growers Association, Oklahoma Pecan Growers Association and Texas Pecan Growers Association are listed as supporting organizations of the letter.

Applications Open for U.S. Department of Agriculture Led Agribusiness Mission to Expand U.S. Exports Abroad

The U.S. Department of Agriculture opened applications on May 4, 2026, for an agribusiness trade mission to Australia taking place from August 30 to September 3. Organized by the Foreign Agricultural Service, the mission is designed to help U.S. producers expand exports to Australia, New Zealand and nearby Pacific Island markets.

Participants will have opportunities to meet buyers, attend networking events and gain market insights, especially since the trip coincides with the Fine Food Australia trade show. With strong demand for U.S. consumer-ready products like packaged foods, meat and beverages, USDA sees this region as a growing export market with significant potential for U.S. agribusinesses.

U.S. Department of Agriculture Announces Agriculture Marketing Service Section 32 Purchase Awarded Contracts

On April 17th the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Agriculture Marketing Service announced the awarded contracts for the Section 32 solicitation announced in February by Secretary Brooke Rollins. A total of \$9,955,723.56 of American pecans were purchased by USDA and will be distributed to food nutrition assistance programs throughout the United States. 🌰

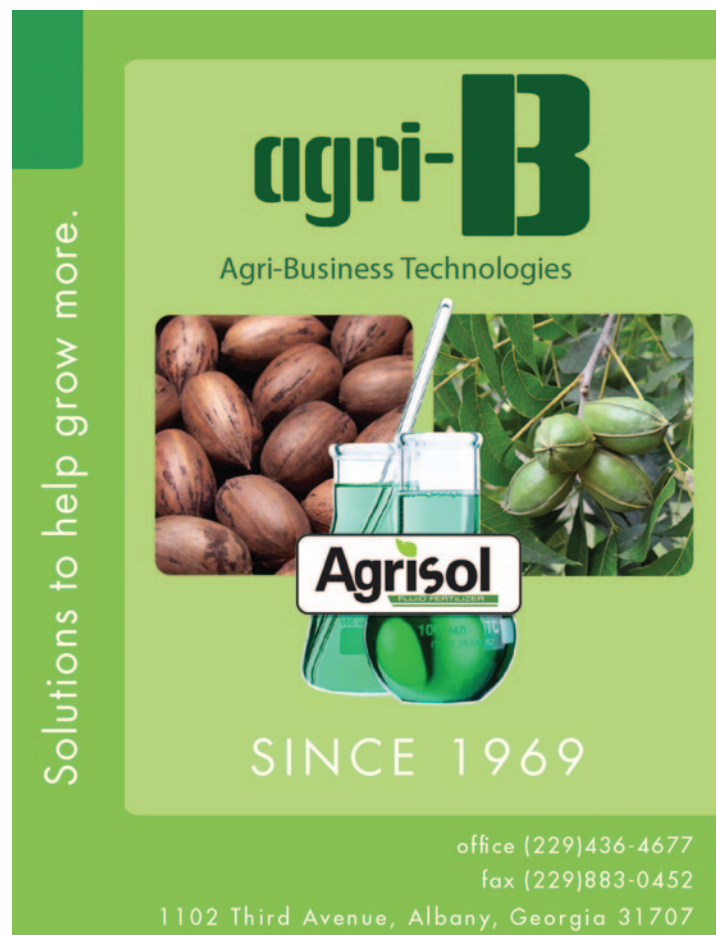


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National Pecan Federation Washington Fly-In

By Mary Mikelyn Bruorton, Editor, *The Pecan Grower Magazine*

Another successful Washington, D.C. fly-in is in the books for the National Pecan Federation (NPF). On April 22nd, eighteen NPF representatives from Georgia, Oklahoma, Texas and New Mexico gathered in the nation's capital to advocate for the needs of U.S. pecan growers. Georgia was proudly represented by Marianne Brown, Scott Hudson, Justin Jones, Trent Mason, Arren Moses and Mary Bruorton. Brown, Mason, and Moses also serve on the NPF Board, playing a key role in representing and relaying the priorities of Georgia growers.

This year's fly-in included three advocacy teams that conducted more than 20 meetings with Congressional offices in a single day. The Georgia delegation met with U.S. Congressman Sanford Bishop (D-GA), U.S. Congressman Austin Scott (R-GA), U.S. Con-

gressman Rick Allen (R-GA), U.S. Senator Raphael Warnock (D-GA), and U.S. Senator Jon Ossoff (D-GA).

The NPF fly-in remains a critical opportunity to communicate the pecan industry's top priorities directly to policymakers—especially as discussions surrounding the next Farm Bill continued. Key topics included trade with India, federal research initiatives, yield exclusion and the broader challenges growers face in an increasingly competitive global market.

In addition to meetings on Capitol Hill, NPF representatives met with officials from the U.S. Trade Representative's Office and the White House to discuss the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA) review. Conversations focused on pecan imports from Mexico and the importance of ensuring U.S. growers can receive a fair domestic market price. These discus-

Continued on Page 18, See Fly-In



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Fly-In, Continued from Page 16

sions were productive and there is optimism that continued engagement will lead to meaningful progress.

NPF Georgia Representative Trent Mason reflected on the importance of the trip: *“We recently completed our DC fly-in, a critical part of the National Pecan Federation’s mission. It’s essential not only to maintain representation in Washington, but also for us as pecan stakeholders to show up in person—sharing our perspectives, concerns, and priorities to help strengthen and advance our industry. I also encourage each of you, if you haven’t already, to contribute to the PAC. Meaningful impact at the national level requires resources, and to date, this has proven to deliver one of the strongest returns on investment for our industry.”*

GPGA Board Member Scott Hudson commented on the value of the trip: *“Regardless of our perspectives on politics, it’s always beneficial to visit our elected officials in Washington. I’m extremely thankful that I got to see first-hand how valuable the annual fly in is for*



NPF Representatives meet with Congressman Rick Allen pictured L-r: Garrett Salopek, Marianne Brown, Mary Bruorton, Jay Glover, Arren Moses, Congressman Rick Allen, Trent Mason, & Lynnae Glover

our industry. Playing “politics” isn’t my “cup of tea”, but Bob Redding and his team made it seamless. Special thanks to all who worked tirelessly to make the mission incredibly successful.”

Continued on Page 20, See Fly-In



Georgia Representatives attended the Annual NPF Fly-In pictured L-r: Chris Harrell, Arren Moses, Justin Jones, Trent Mason, Marianne Brown, Scott Hudson, Mary Bruorton, & Jeff Worn

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Fly-In, Continued from Page 18

Beyond the meetings, the fly-in provided an important platform for collaboration and alignment among pecan industry leaders from across the country. By bringing together growers from different regions, NPF strengthens its collective voice and highlights both the shared challenges and opportunities across the 15-state pecan belt.

This year's fly-in once again underscored the National Pecan Federation's strong commitment to advocating for growers and advancing policies that support the industry. Special thanks go to Bob Redding, Laura Redding and Kat Marty of The Redding Firm for organizing another impactful and well-executed trip. Their behind-the-scenes efforts ensure that growers are well-prepared and positioned to make the most of these important opportunities.

As the industry looks ahead to the finalization of the Farm Bill and other key federal decisions, NPF remains committed to being a strong, consistent voice in

Washington. The fly-in is more than a tradition—it is an essential part of shaping the future of U.S. pecans. 🌰



NPF Representatives meet with Grace A. Hasler with the Executive Office of the President at the White House pictured L-r: Trent Mason, Jeff Worn, Grace A. Hasler, Justin Jones, & Chris Harrell



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Managing Pecan Aphids Through the Growing Season

By Dr. Apurba Barman, Assistant Professor, University of Georgia
Rajendra Acharya, Postdoctoral Research Associate, University of Georgia

Following much-needed rainfall across the state, growers are getting back into the field and moving ahead with seasonal farm operations. Pecan orchards are currently in the early stages of the production season and overall conditions look promising. Trees have a good nut set and scab pressure has been somewhat delayed compared to previous years. Most growers have already completed their first spray for phylloxera and many either recently applied insecticides for pecan nut casebearer or are preparing to do so during early May. As we move into June, growers can expect to see aphids in their orchards and may begin considering whether aphid management is needed.

There are three main aphid species that feed on pecan leaves: yellow pecan aphids, blackmargined aphids and black pecan aphids. The first two species are yellow in color and look very similar, especially during their immature stages.

Black pecan aphids, however, are darker and much easier to distinguish from the yellow aphids (Figure 1). These aphid species also differ in the type of damage they cause. Yellow aphids feed heavily on plant sap, particularly the phloem sap in leaves. Black pecan aphids feed differently and are more damaging to leaf tissue. Their feeding causes chlorophyll breakdown, which creates yellow spots on the leaves. These damaged areas become ideal feeding sites for future generations of black pecan aphids.

Yellow aphids typically begin appearing in May once leaves are fully expanded

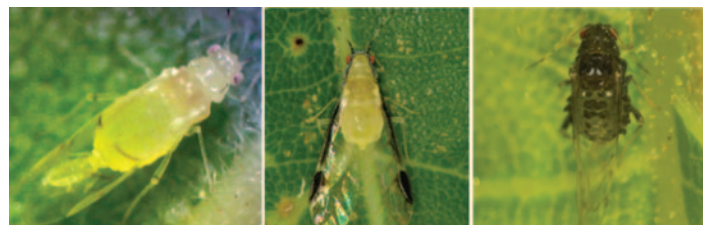


Figure 1. Adults of three aphid species on pecan crops: yellow pecan aphid (left), blackmargined aphid (center) and black pecan aphid (right).

after pollination. One of the first signs of infestation is shiny, sticky droplets on leaves. This substance, known as honeydew, is produced by aphids as they feed. As aphid populations increase, honeydew accumulates on leaves and branches, especially in the lower parts of the canopy. During heavy infestations, honeydew may even drip from the trees on sunny days.

Because honeydew is sugary, it promotes the growth of sooty mold fungi. This results in the black coating often seen on leaves during aphid outbreaks (Figure 2). Although this coating can reduce photosynthesis and slightly lower the tree's energy production, pecan trees can usually tolerate moderate populations of yellow aphids without significant impacts on tree health or nut production. For that reason, insecticide applications for

Continued on Page 24, See Season



Figure 2. Result of aphid feeding on pecan leaves: shiny leaves from honeydew droplets deposition on the upper leaf surface from yellow aphids (left), sooty mold growth on the honeydew on the leaf surface resulting in a black coating (center) and chlorosis on leaves from black pecan aphid feeding (right).



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Season, Continued from Page 22

yellow aphids are generally not recommended unless infestations become severe and trees are heavily covered in honeydew and sooty mold. Beneficial insects such as lady beetles, lacewings, minute pirate bugs and parasitic wasps often provide effective natural control of yellow aphids.

In the past, broad-spectrum insecticides that were used to control pests like pecan nut casebearer would often also kill these beneficial insects along with the targeted pests. However, the increased use of more selective insecticides, including methoxyfenozide (Intrepid®), spinetoram with methoxyfenozide (Intrepid Edge®), chlorantraniliprole (Coragen® or Vantacor®) and imidacloprid has helped preserve beneficial insect populations in pecan orchards. As a result, growers today generally experience fewer problems from yellow aphids than in previous decades.

Black pecan aphids are different. Unlike yellow aphids, they produce very little honeydew, so sooty mold is rarely present. Instead, their feeding causes yellow spots, or chlorosis, on leaves. These spots eventually turn brown and heavily damaged leaves may drop prematurely. Severe infestations can cause significant defoliation before harvest, compromising tree health and potentially reducing yield.

Another challenge with black pecan aphids is that they are less effectively controlled by natural enemies. Unlike yellow aphids, there are currently no known parasitoids that provide meaningful suppression of black pecan aphid populations. Because of their damaging feeding habits and limited natural control, black pecan aphids are more likely to require insecticide treatment.

In general, moderate populations of yellow aphids should be tolerated whenever possible. They provide food for beneficial insects, which also help suppress other pests such as mites and shuckworms. If yellow aphid populations become severe enough to require treatment, growers should choose selective insecticides

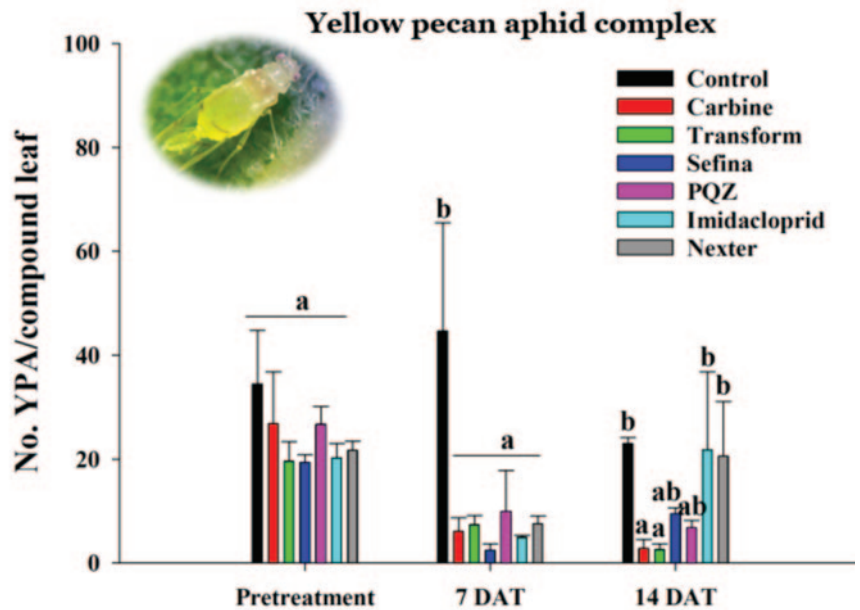


Figure 3. Efficacy of selected insecticides on yellow pecan aphids based on a field trial in 2025.

such as Transform®, Carbine®, Sefina®, PQZ® or imidacloprid (Figure 3). Broad-spectrum insecticides, particularly pyrethroids, should be avoided because they can reduce beneficial insect populations and often lead to

Continued on Page 25, See Season

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Season, Continued from Page 24

secondary outbreaks of aphids or mites later in the season.

Black pecan aphids usually do not become a serious problem until late July or August. Over the past two years, treatable populations were generally not observed until mid-August. However, susceptibility varies among pecan cultivars. Varieties such as Sumner, Schley and Gloria Grande are especially vulnerable and may require treatment as soon as immature black pecan aphids are detected.

Field trials conducted at the UGA Ponder Farm in 2023 and 2025 evaluated several insecticides for aphid control (Figures 3 and 4). Results showed that Transform®, Carbine® and PQZ® consistently provided strong control of both yellow and black pecan aphids. Sefina® performed similarly well against yellow aphids but was somewhat less effective against black pecan aphids. Imidacloprid and Nexter® provided comparatively lower control of both aphid species after two weeks of observation.

Black pecan aphid immature stage

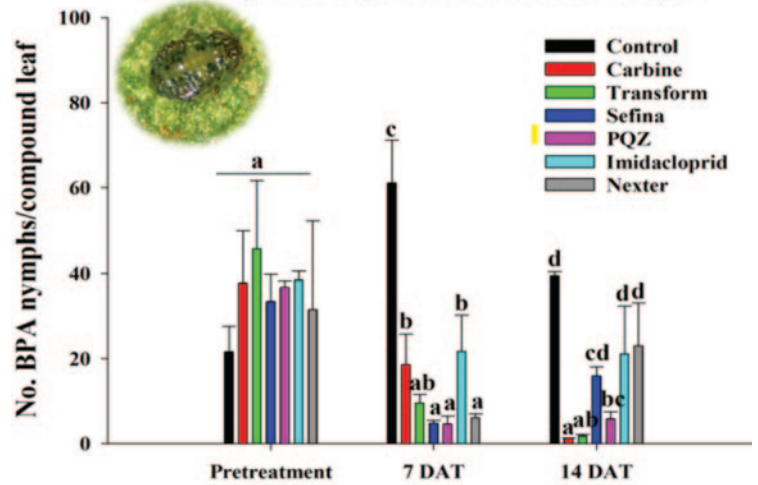


Figure 4. Efficacy of selected insecticides on black pecan aphids based on a field trial in 2025.

Growers should remember that insecticide performance can vary between orchards. Repeated use of the same product can lead to reduced sensitivity or increased tolerance in local aphid populations. To reduce this risk and maintain product effectiveness, insecticides should be rotated rather than relying on the same product repeatedly throughout the season. 🌰

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Indian Influencers Visit Georgia

By Mary Mikelyn Bruorton, Editor, *The Pecan Grower Magazine*

The Georgia Pecan Growers Association (GPGA) recently wrapped up its 2026 Georgia Pecan Chef Innovation Tour after welcoming a dynamic group of food influencers from India for a four-day experience held April 12th-15th. Designed to highlight the versatility and global potential of Georgia pecans, the tour hosted eight participants whose combined Instagram reach exceeds nine million followers. Among them was Sumit Saran, a longtime collaborator with both GPGA and American Pecans, who helped coordinate the mission.

The tour kicked off with a welcome reception on Sunday evening at Avize in Atlanta. The event brought together distinguished guests, including Georgia Agriculture Commissioner Tyler Harper, Consul General of India Ramesh Babu Lakshmanan, and Georgia pecan growers. The evening set an engaging tone, offering attendees the chance to connect and share ideas on expanding Georgia pecans in international markets.

On Monday, participants explored the culinary possibilities of pecans alongside six Georgia Grown chefs—Deborah VanTrece, Alan Byers, Duane Nutter, Joey Ward, Woolery Back, and James Gallo. In a “speed dating with dishes” format, each chef presented a unique pecan-inspired recipe, giving influencers a hands-on and immersive tasting experience. The day concluded with a family-style dinner featuring the collaborative creations.

Tuesday shifted the focus to the orchards, where attendees experienced pecans at their source. Joined by eleven Georgia growers, influencers rotated through hands-on cooking stations—heat, savory, and sweet—creating their own flavored pecans. Fittingly, the visit coincided with National Pecan Day, making the orchard experience even more meaningful. The group also toured Lane Southern Orchards to learn about post-harvest processing, followed by a shared lunch there.

Continued on Page 27, See Visit

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Visit Continued from Page 26

The final day highlighted product innovation and pecan versatility at the Atlanta Botanical Garden. Georgia Grown companies showcased a wide range of pecan-based products, including pecan coffee, milk, oil and butter, along with curated pairings featuring cheese and bourbon. The tour concluded with a closing reception at Southern National in Atlanta featuring the creations of Chef Duane Nutter.

Throughout the experience, the tour emphasized the immense opportunity of India's growing demand for nuts.

Influencers expressed strong enthusiasm, noting that the trip opened their eyes to the limitless culinary potential of pecans, particularly in Indian cuisine. Many shared excitement about incorporating pecans into their own recipes and content.

The Innovation Tour received overwhelmingly positive feedback, with participants praising both the experience and GPGA's thoughtful execution. One influencer described it as the best tour they have attended in the United States.

GPGA extends sincere appreciation to the growers, chefs, partners, and supporters who made this event possible. Their efforts not only showcased the strength of Georgia's pecan industry but also helped lay the groundwork for future growth in international markets. This mission was made possible by funding support from

the USDA's Specialty Crop Block Grant program through the Georgia Department of Agriculture, the Georgia Commodity Commission for Pecans, and the American Pecan Council.

Looking ahead, GPGA remains committed to building global partnerships and elevating the presence of Georgia pecans worldwide. The Innovation Tour is a strong example of what collaboration can achieve—and a promising step forward in expanding the global reach of Georgia pecans. 🌰

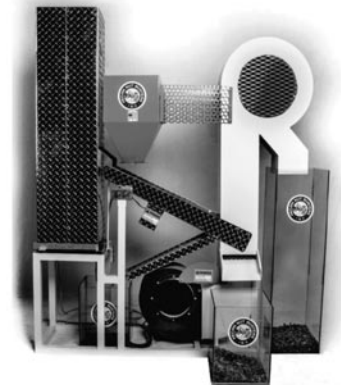
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Indian Culinary Creators Experience the World of Georgia Pecans

*By Sumit Saran
SS Associates, India Marketing Representative
of the American Pecan Council*

A distinguished group of India’s leading Key Opinion Leaders (KOLs) including chefs, food storytellers, and digital creators embarked on an immersive trade mission and innovation tour to Georgia from April 12-15, 2026 to explore the rich heritage, cultivation and culinary possibilities of Georgia pecans. Bringing together diverse voices from India’s evolving food ecosystem, the visit blended agriculture, gastronomy, nutrition, culture and content creation into a unique farm-to-table experience designed to deepen awareness about premium American pecans in the Indian market.

The KOLs who participated on the Georgia Pecan Tour were:



Shreya Agarwala

Instagram Followers: 1.9M

Instagram Handle: Ohcheatday

Shreya Agarwala, popularly known as “ohcheatday,” is a digital creator with over 1.9M followers. She creates engaging, aesthetic and easy-to-follow food content that resonates with everyday home cooks. Her soothing presentation style and practical recipes drive strong audience interaction. Shreya’s authenticity makes her a trusted voice in the digital food space.



Pavitra Kaur

Instagram Followers: 551K

Instagram Handle: pavitrakaur

Pavitra Kaur is a food and lifestyle creator known for relatable recipes and everyday wellness content. Her content focuses on simple meals, snack ideas and balanced lifestyle choices. She connects well with urban, health-conscious audiences through practical and engaging storytelling. Pavitra is ideal for promoting mindful eating and everyday nutrition.



Chef Natasha Gandhi

Instagram Followers: 1.6 million

Instagram Handle: Chef Natasha Gandhi

Chef Natasha Gandhi, known from MasterChef India, specialises in innovative and healthy cooking. Her content blends nutrition with creativity, making traditional foods relevant for modern lifestyles. Through easy recipes and

Continued on Page 33, See Creators



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Creators Continued from Page 32

wellness-focused tips, she inspires healthier eating habits. Her mindful and authentic approach drives strong engagement and audience trust.



Chef Neha Deepak Shah

Instagram Followers: 2.2 million

Instagram Handle: nehadeepakshah

MasterChef India Season 4 runner-up, Chef Neha Deepak Shah is a renowned vegetarian chef, food scientist and flavourist. She is known for her simple, science-backed and flavor-driven recipes that resonate strongly with home cooks. Her content consistently drives high engagement through saves, shares and recreations.



Uma Raghuraman

Instagram Followers: 1.2 million

Instagram Handle: masterchefmom

Uma Raghuraman, known as “Masterchef Mom,” creates wholesome Indian recipes inspired by fresh, local ingredients. An award-winning creator, she gained recognition through Netflix’s My Chef’s Table Instagram contest. Her content blends traditional flavors with modern wellness. Her step-by-step recipes and practical tips continue to inspire home cooks widely.



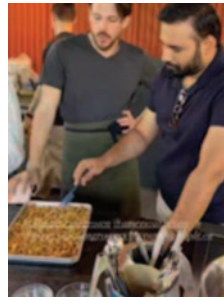
Chef Nishant Choubey

Instagram Followers: 395,000

Instagram Handle:

chef_nishant_choubey

Chef Nishant Choubey brings over two decades of fine dining experience across global kitchens. He has worked with renowned names like The Oberoi Hotels and Michelin-recognized Indus, Bangkok, and won the Iron Chef Challenge 2018. His expertise spans multiple international collaborations and consulting roles. Known for his focus on sustainability and innovation, he is a respected name in modern Indian cuisine.



Srinivasa Parachuri

Instagram Followers: 1.7 million

Instagram Handle: vismaifoodie

Srinivasa Parachuri is a Hyderabad-based food creator with a strong regional presence and over a million followers on Instagram and over 5 million followers on YouTube. He is known for visually appealing, easy-to-follow recipe content rooted in Indian flavors. His storytelling-driven approach makes every day cooking accessible and engaging. His strong reach across South India enhances campaign visibility and audience connection.



Mister Tikku

Instagram Followers: 277,000

Instagram Handle: mistertikku

Gurpreet Singh Tikku, popularly known as Mister Tikku, is a leading food influencer known for his warm, engaging storytelling style. His content spans street food, restaurant reviews and cultural food explorations across India. With a loyal and highly engaged audience, he brings authenticity and relatability to every recommendation. His vibrant personality strengthens audience trust and connection.

The carefully curated itinerary blended orchard visits, chef collaborations, educational sessions and elevated dining experiences that allowed the delegation to explore the journey of pecans from farm to plate while creating authentic, story-driven content and gain deeper insight into the pecan industry.

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April 12, 2026 : A Fine Dining Welcome at Avize

The trip began with an elegant welcome dinner at Avize, the acclaimed Atlanta restaurant led by Chef Karl S. Gorline. Known for his refined contemporary cuisine, Chef Gorline curated a special multi-course pecan-inspired menu showcasing the versatility of Georgia pecans through elevated savory and dessert creations.

The dinner was attended by the Consul General of India in Atlanta, Georgia, Mr. Ramesh Babu Lakshmanan, adding a meaningful cultural and diplomatic touch to the evening.

April 13, 2026: Learning the Versatility of Pecans

A special educational session “Pecans 101” was organized at a luncheon at Max Lager’s restaurant. The session introduced the delegation to the rich nutritional profile of pecans, including their role as a heart-healthy ingredient packed with antioxidants, healthy fats, fiber and plant-based protein.

Georgia Grown Executive Chef Holly Chute also shared insights into the growing global appeal of pecans and their adaptability across cuisines, inspiring the Indian chefs and creators to think beyond traditional applications and explore new culinary possibilities.

The day continued with interactive chef introductions inside the Hyatt Atlanta kitchen featuring celebrated Georgia culinary maestros Chef Duane Nutter, Chef Alan Byers, Chef Joey Ward and Chef Deborah VanTrece. Each chef presented signature dishes and unique culinary concepts incorporating pecans in creative ways.

In an engaging “Speed Dating with Dishes” session, Indian chefs and creators rotated through culinary stations every 15 minutes, experiencing diverse pecan-inspired dishes, flavors and techniques while interacting with Atlanta’s top chefs. The evening concluded with a family-style meal at the Hyatt’s private dining room, fostering conversations around food, creativity and culinary storytelling.

Continued on Page 34, See Creators



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**April 14, 2026: From Orchard to Plate
& Elevated Southern Dining and Pecan Pairings**

This day's visit to Mason Pecan Farm gave participants firsthand insight into pecan farming and harvesting practices. During the farm tour and Pecan Pop-Up, chefs and creators prepared innovative sweet, savoury and spicy pecan flavourings, which highlighted the ingredient's versatility. What better way to celebrate National Pecan Day!

The group also visited Lane Southern Orchards for facility tour, gaining deeper understanding of pecan production and processing followed by a special lunch.

The culinary journey continued with "Pecan and Pairings" at Ticonderoga that evening in Atlanta, where Chef David Bies presented a thoughtfully curated dinner celebrating Southern flavours and pecan-inspired pairings. The experience highlighted how pecans can seamlessly complement both classic Southern cuisine and contemporary fine dining techniques.

Each dish reflected a balance of texture, richness and innovation, further reinforcing pecan's versatility within modern gastronomy.

**April 15, 2026: Innovation Takes Centre Stage
at the Botanical Garden & A Memorable Finale**

The final phase of the Georgia Pecan Innovation Tour and trade mission focused on future-forward applications of pecans during a special presentation session at the Atlanta Botanical Gardens.

Several Georgia companies showcased an exciting range of pecan-based products, dishes and beverages, which demonstrated pecan's expanding role in the global food industry. Participating companies included Horne Pecan Company, Granola People, Pecan Milk Coop, Ellis Bros Pecans and several other innovators presenting creative concepts spanning snacks, beverages, dairy alternatives, desserts and functional foods.

The presentations offered the Indian delegation valuable insight into emerging trends, consumer preferences and new opportunities for pecan integration within inter-

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national markets, including India’s rapidly evolving culinary and wellness sectors.

The trip concluded with a memorable dinner that evening at Southern National hosted by Chef Duane Nutter, renowned for his modern interpretation of Southern cuisine and his commitment to storytelling through food. The dinner brought together the themes of the entire journey -- agriculture, innovation, heritage, flavor and collaboration, through dishes that celebrated Southern ingredients while highlighting the culinary potential of pecans in sophisticated and contemporary ways.

Trip Results

Beyond the on-ground experiences, the Georgia Pecan Innovation Tour generated significant social media impact through the participating chefs and creators, who shared real-time content, behind-the-scenes experiences, orchard visits, chef collaborations and pecan-inspired dishes across their digital platforms. The authentic storytelling and engaging visual content helped am-

plify awareness of Georgia pecans among Indian audiences, creating strong online engagement and expanding the ingredient’s visibility within India’s growing culinary and wellness communities.

Across social media platforms, the creators shared moments that ranged from sunrise orchard walks and pecan tastings to conversations with multigenerational farming families — helping Indian audiences connect emotionally with the ingredient and its origin. The posts and stories of the KOLs have so far resulted in over 5 million views with a high engagement of over 2.5%. Details are as under:

Georgia Pecan - FAM Trip			
S.No	KOLs	Total Views	Engagement Percentage
1	Pavitra Kaur	2,282,400	0.06%
2	Shreya Agarwala	1,086,916	0.12%
3	Srinivasa Parachuri	839,189	0.55%
4	Chef Natasha Gandhi	668,523	0.52%
5	Chef Neha Deepak shah	523,483	0.25%
6	Uma Raghuraman	193,534	0.23%
7	Mister Tikku	32,000	0.14%
8	Chef Nishant Choubey	5,897	0.63%
TOTAL		5,631,942	2.50%

Continued on Page 37, See Creators






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Building awareness through authentic storytelling

In today's digital-first environment, consumers increasingly seek authenticity and provenance in the foods they consume. By bringing respected Indian culinary voices directly to the source, the Georgia pecan industry created an opportunity for organic storytelling rooted in real experiences rather than traditional promotion.

The tour was designed not only to showcase pecans as an ingredient, but to build an authentic understanding of the ecosystem behind them. The visit encouraged conversations about how pecans can align with India's rapidly evolving food trends, particularly in:

- Healthy snacking
- Gourmet retail
- Café and bakery applications
- Festive gifting
- Premium desserts
- Modern Indian cuisine

As India's appetite for premium global ingredients continues to grow, initiatives like this Georgia Pecan Innovation Tour and trade mission play an important role in bridging producers, chefs, creators and consumers. For the visiting delegation, the experience offered far more than a professional visit. It became an exploration of agriculture, culture, hospitality and culinary innovation — all centered around one ingredient that is steadily finding a place in modern Indian kitchens: Georgia pecans.

The Georgia Pecan Growers Association successfully created meaningful connections between Indian chefs, food creators, growers and culinary experts that strengthened awareness of Georgia pecans while inspiring future collaborations and creative culinary applications in India.

GPGA would like to extend our sincere thanks to SS Associates, the India market representative of the American Pecan Council, that helped to coordinate this trip, along with funding contributions that helped to make this event possible from the American Pecan Council and the Georgia Commodity Commission for Pecans.

Funding for this project was made possible by a grant/cooperative agreement from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Agriculture Marketing Service. Its contents are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of the USDA. We would also like to offer special thanks to the Georgia Department of Agriculture for its partnership during the administration of this award. 🌰

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From Orchard to Consumer: General Food Safety Practices for Pecan Producers

*Dr. Cameron Bardsley and Kaicie Chasteen
USDA ARS Fruit and Tree Nut Research Unit, Byron GA*

Understanding the Need for Food Safety Practices for Pecans

A pecan producer may look at the available resources and information on pecan food safety and come away with more questions than answers, particularly regarding food safety practices for their own operation. Historically, pecans have been considered a low microbial risk food, given their use in baked goods and other cooked products that have a thermal step that acts as a final microbial kill step. In the past lower levels of production have allowed for more attention to detail during processing, reducing potential product contamination.

These factors may lead a producer to have a false sense of security because previous practices were sufficient and that those practices can be safely applied to the current production standard. In an ever-changing agricultural environment, it is not recommended to have the mindset “that it has never been a problem so why should I worry about it”. This thought may be true, but only when applied to an unchanging industry. With a total production of approximately 271 million pounds valued at \$460 million in 2023 (12), the pecan industry is making major strides to expand to the point that producers need to be proactive to potential risks that may impact that growth including food safety.

As an industry grows and reaches new markets, it is well documented that the chances of contamination and recall begin to increase. What was once viewed primarily as an ingredient in baked goods and cooked products has begun to see wide adoption as a raw snack. The consumption of raw pecans shifts the responsibility from the consumer to the producers to reduce contamination risk and implement proper mitigation strategies. With pecans being a good source of protein and being viewed as healthy alternative to other snack foods, the likelihood of raw nuts being served to populations more susceptible to foodborne illness like young children or the elderly increases.

Maximizing the price for a crop due to demand is desirable, however with higher value comes higher standards for both quality and safety. Recent voluntary recalls due to *Salmonella* contamination in pecans (9) have emphasized the importance of elevating and maintaining safety and quality standards in a growing pecan industry. We have learned from other industries and commodities, like leafy greens and peanut butter, that when a product is involved in a foodborne pathogen recall and outbreak the industry as a whole is economically impacted not only the producers who have not been implicated. Preventing further recalls and potential outbreaks benefits the industry as a whole.

In order to better understand food safety practices for pecans, it is best to separate potential routes of contamination and mitigation strategies into two cate-

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gories, pre-harvest (including harvest) practices and post-harvest practices (Figure 1). An important principle to remember is that the goal is an overall reduction in risk. Many small simple steps can result in the same net reduction as a single expensive one, with the added benefit of additional chances to catch a problem before it grows. Though there is currently no mandated pathogen reduction level for pecans, the FDA benchmark for similar nut products is a cumulative 5-log CFU (colony forming units) reduction in pathogens (10). Similarly, the National Pecan Shellers Association (NPSA) recommends a 4-5 log reduction.

Pre-Harvest and Harvest

Many pre-harvest food safety risks are due to direct exposure to a pathogen reservoir such as animal feces. Co-management of an orchard has a lot of great benefits for soil fertility and economic impact. An orchard co-managed with grazing animals like cattle may present a higher risk of potential cross contamination of foodborne pathogen contamination (8). Not grazing the orchard presents the lowest risk but may not always be economically viable. Once in the soil, pathogens can potentially survive for several months, which may be transferred to nuts during harvest (4). Controllable factors such as contaminated equipment or water could contribute risk, however pathogen introduction via wildlife, heavy rainfall, or windblown dust from a nearby commercial animal operation add potential contamination a producer cannot fully account for.

Building awareness of these contamination routes and their removal or mitigation can be challenging to add to an established orchard, however interventions can be simple. Time and dry weather can often reduce risks. Removing grazing herds three to four months (90-

Pecan Contamination Risks in the Orchard and During Post-Harvest Handling

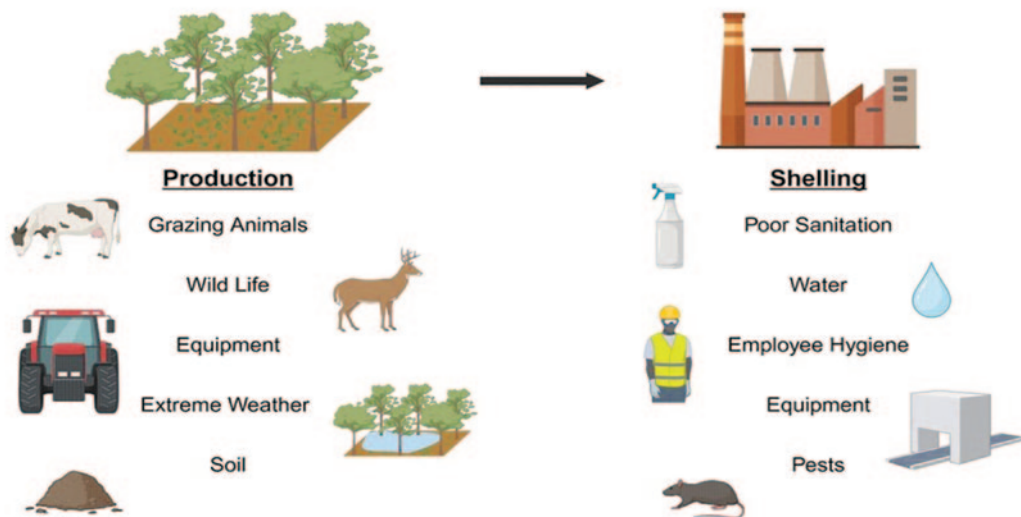


Figure 1. Food safety contamination risks during preharvest, harvest, and postharvest handling of pecans.

120 days) prior to harvest to allow the natural breakdown of manure and the die-off of potential foodborne pathogens (2). Likewise, waiting to harvest several days after heavy rainfall for soil to dry allows for pathogen populations to fall to lower levels and limit the transfer of bacteria from the soil to pecan due to shell and soil moisture which promotes transfer (4). Pest control, removal of waste products, and cleaning of equipment with sanitary water at regular intervals can also be meaningful parts of a preharvest pathogen reduction strategy. While this may not be economically feasible, catch harvest removes the risk of pecans coming in contact with the soil avoiding potential cross-contamination in the soil.

Post-Harvest

After harvest, chances for potential pathogen cross contamination may increase with each further processing step without intervention, particularly in those that involve extreme changes in temperature or moisture content. Even during heat treatment once present, pathogens such as *Salmonella* survive on pecan halves despite being a low moisture food, possibly due to its higher percentage fat.

Processes involving water baths containing inadequate amounts of sanitizer can facilitate cross contamination in both in-shell and shelled nuts, particularly for

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in-shell when the water is colder than the product being added (5). Percentage of shell detritus in a batch, cleanliness of the product, whether product is in-shell, halves, or pieces, and immersion time can reduce sanitizer efficacy and increase cross contamination (3). Evaluating and determining effective sanitizers and at what level they should be implemented is key to maintaining safety and improving kernel quality.

The lack of well thought out and properly implemented sanitation standard operating procedures (SSOPs) could potentially contribute to a growing sanitation problem until the issue becomes a true hazard. Poor sanitation practices, improper handling and storage, poorly maintained buildings and equipment, and untrained or under-trained employees can compound contamination risks (15). Interventions can be as simple as ensuring adequate and consistent sanitizer concentrations, spot checking after cleaning equipment, and yearly staff refresher training.

Thermal processing such as hot water, steam conditioning, and oil roasting can be effective. However, because of *Salmonella*'s documented resistance to heat on higher fat products, validation is necessary if a producer chooses to implement it as an intervention. Level of reduction can vary greatly between treatments, though data indicates that many thermal techniques achieve at least a 4 log CFU reduction (6, 11, 13). Steam conditioning, though shown to be effective in other nuts, has not been thoroughly tested on in-shell pecans and reduction can vary greatly depending on pathogen, pecan variety, and type of steam used (11). If a producer is already using these methods, well maintained documentation and validation of their effectiveness can provide evidence in the event of a supply chain investigation.

Traditional non-thermal processing such as antimicrobials and sanitizers, and novel approaches such as intense pulsed light and cold atmospheric plasma work best as additional treatments either in combination with thermal or in a multistep non-thermal sanitization plan (Figure 2). Use of sanitizers can be an effective addition

if a minimum effective concentration is maintained for the application. Recent data collected at USDA-Byron has indicated that chlorine in a shelled halves float system was effective only if the chlorine was maintained at 200 parts-per-million or higher. Additional application of a secondary sanitizer or antimicrobial after the first such as peroxyacetic acid (PAA), sodium dodecyl sulphate (SDS), or lactic acid, can have a compounded effect resulting in a greater reduction than each sanitizer on its own (7). A sanitizer's effectiveness and sustained efficacy during use should also be figured into process planning. Chlorine based sanitizers tend to lose effectiveness quicker when exposed to high levels of organic matter, making it necessary to replenish them more often when used with nuts mixed with shell or other undesirable waste products (3). Novel approaches such as intense pulsed light and cold atmospheric plasma have been applied to low moisture foods and in limited capacity to pecans with some success(1, 14), gaining in-

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terest due to a lower impact on product quality when applied correctly. A combined treatment of IPL and CAP can result in a reported 3.91 log reduction of E. coli on pecan kernels, though like other approaches this is dependent on multiple factors such as distance and exposure time (1). Further research is being carried out to identify the most effective parameters of IPL treatment on pecans when implemented in a pecan shelling environment.

Conclusions

The most effective interventions are ones that can be easily implemented, validated, and maintained by the operation that plans to use them. The reality of most agricultural operations is that one size does not fit all, and finding a balance between practicality and effectiveness can be challenging. A pecan grower that has the opportunity to comanage their orchard with livestock cannot

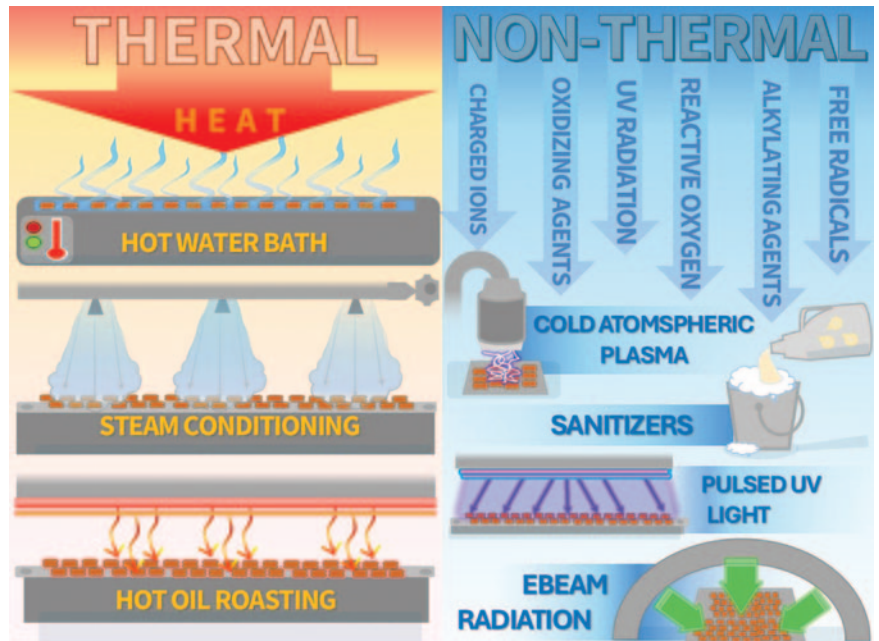


Figure 2. Postharvest intervention strategies that can be used to limit contamination or reduce potential pathogen levels on pecans.

ignore the added financial and improved soil benefits but can address food safety concerns by implementing practices such as removing the livestock 90-120 days prior to harvests, dragging to break up manure faster,

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and/or using a catch harvest technique in grazed orchards to reduce the risk of product contamination. A small processor may not have the means to install a state-of-the-art system but could easily evaluate available sanitizers that can be used in their conditioning or float tanks and implement procedures to maintain sanitizer levels along with exploring the use of a secondary sanitizer application followed by a heat treatment. As an operation's output grows the need for more specific control strategies to meet customer requirements may be needed. Along with effective SSOPs, implementing multiple validated intervention strategies across the production process can effectively achieve pathogen reduction goals and provide reassurance to consumers about the safety of the pecan products they consume.

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Continued on Page 43, See Safety

PECAN PRODUCTION MANAGEMENT TIPS

August	September	October
<ul style="list-style-type: none">-Make 2nd or 3rd N application if needed during "on" year (not needed with short crop)-Irrigate as needed-Be sure to maintain adequate soil moisture beginning in mid August as nuts fill-Keep orchard mowed-Patch bud-Apply fungicides at 14 day intervals-Apply herbicides as needed-Monitor for pecan weevil and hickory shuckworm-Keep leaves free of aphids and mites-Scout and spray as needed for insect pests-Prepare for Pawnee harvest by mowing, remove debris and service equipment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">-Prepare for harvest by mowing, remove debris and service equipment-Harvest Pawnee-Be sure to maintain adequate soil moisture as nuts fill-Patch bud-Keep leaves free of aphids and mites-Scout for pecan weevil and hickory shuckworm-Scout and spray as needed for insect pests-Fungicide sprays may be needed under heavy disease pressure	<ul style="list-style-type: none">-Prepare for harvest by mowing, remove debris and service equipment-Make Fall nickel application to severely deficient trees-Early harvesting may begin-Nuts may need mechanical drying-Market crop-Continue irrigation as needed-Prepare site for new planting-Apply herbicide as needed-Be aware of pre-harvest intervals for all chemicals applied

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GPGA CONFERENCE



By Scout Weesner, GPGA Communications & Events Coordinator

The 61st Annual Conference and Trade Show of the Georgia Pecan Growers Association took place March 30 – April 1, 2026, at the Georgia National Fairgrounds in Perry, Georgia. This year’s event marked another successful gathering for the pecan industry, drawing nearly 80 exhibitors and more than 550 attendees from across the Southeast and beyond.

On Monday, March 30th vendors and large equipment began moving into the venue for an early setup. On Tuesday, March 31st the Conference kicked off officially with golf and skeet activities. At the Houston Lake Country Club in Perry, GPGA’s 16th Annual Golf Tournament welcomed a full field of participants, while the 5th Annual Skeet Shoot Tournament took place at Meadows Gun Club in Forsyth. Both events continue to serve as important fundraisers for GPGA and once again saw tremendous participation from growers, exhibitors and industry supporters.

from Riden Soil claimed first place honors. Second place was awarded to Barbour Farms, while Hudson Pecan Company secured a third-place finish.

The Skeet Shoot Tournament also saw strong participation, with more than 80 shooters competing at the range. Team Triangle #2 earned first place with an impressive score of 323 out of 400. Second place went to the Shiloh team consisting of Jeb Paulk, Eli Paulk, Curtis Ray and Casper Jones with a score of 300 out of 400. Merica Agro #1 secured third place with a score of 298 out of 400. Individual awards were also highly competitive, with Curtis Ray taking first place overall shooter honors, Tate Skipper earning second place and Eli Paulk finishing third. We had an amazing time at both events and look forward to hosting them again next year.



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AND TRADE SHOW



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an evening of networking accompanied by heavy hors d'oeuvres, an open bar, and live music. The reception also featured a Silent Auction, which generated substantial proceeds for GPGA's fundraising efforts. In addition, the always-popular Reverse Raffle added excitement to

the evening, engaging attendees and supporting fundraising efforts throughout the night.

On Wednesday, April 1st the educational portion of the conference officially

commenced in the Main Exhibit Hall. GPGA offered a wide variety of educational sessions including updates from APC and APPB marketing representatives, a grower panel, research presentations, and industry updates. The day provided attendees with valuable insights into current challenges, innovations, and opportunities within the pecan industry, making it both informative and highly engaging.

Midday on Wednesday, over 500 attendees gathered for GPGA's Annual Awards Luncheon. GPGA Executive Director Mary Bruorton and members of the GPGA

Board of Directors presided over the presentation of the Association's annual awards, recognizing individuals who have made outstanding contributions to the Georgia pecan industry.

The luncheon keynote address was delivered by Robert Redding of The Redding Firm, a longtime advocate and lobbyist for the pecan industry on Capitol Hill. Redding provided updates regarding political changes in Washington, D.C., along with disaster relief efforts that could impact Georgia growers. Through his bipartisan work with key policymakers, Redding continues to advocate for meaningful progress on behalf of Georgia growers and the U.S. pecan industry as a whole.

The GPGA extends heartfelt gratitude to all attendees, sponsors, exhibitors, researchers, speakers, and volunteers whose collective efforts contributed to the success of the 61st Annual Conference and Trade Show. The Association now looks forward to reconvening for another successful gathering at the 2027 Conference. 🥜



2026 GPGA Award Recipients

Hilton Segler Lifetime Achievement Award



This award recognizes an individual who has, through many years of service, exemplified truly outstanding leadership through unselfish dedication to GPGA and the pecan industry.

For 2026 the Hilton Segler Lifetime Achievement award was given to Gordon Chapman, with the award presented by GPGA Board Member Rob Cohen. Chapman's peers described him as a brilliant pecan farmer, devoted friend and caring soul for the pecan industry. Chapman has been lifetime member of GPGA and an advocate for Georgia pecans.

Georgia Pecan Grower of the Year Award



This award is given to an individual grower who has shown a devoted and sustaining commitment and exerted a positive influence by promoting the pecan industry. They stand out for their leadership, hard work, support and involvement with GPGA and the industry. They have devoted a major portion of their career to other growers by sharing their knowledge of their overall farm operation to improve the industry.

For 2026, the Pecan Grower of the Year award was given to Bryan Peters and presented by GPGA Board Member Michael Horne Jr. Peters has always been an advocate for Georgia pecans and the pecan growers. Thank you, Bryan, for all that you have done for the Georgia pecan industry through the years!

Jack Thompson Memorial Award



This award is given to a family that exemplifies all the basic morals and values of a good neighbor, friend and pecan grower and serves as a model for what a pecan family can achieve. They show our industry how important family farming continues to be as a foundation for the future and for organizations like GPGA.

For 2026, the Jack Thompson Memorial award was given to The Powell Family and presented by Cason Anderson. The Powell Family has been farming pecans in Richmond County. The Powell's have always been an advocate for Georgia pecans and GPGA.

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Delivering Value: How the American Pecan Council is Driving Demand and Grower Returns



By Anne Warden, CEO of American Pecan Council & American Pecan Promotion Board

For pecan growers navigating an ever-changing agricultural landscape, the value of industry investment must be clear and measurable. The American Pecan Council (APC) is committed to demonstrating that coordinated marketing and data-driven strategy can deliver exactly that – stronger demand, expanded markets, and better tools to support grower profitability.

APC continues to focus on increasing demand while equipping the industry with the insights needed to make informed decisions. Even just this past year showed meaningful progress on both fronts.

Building Demand Through Nutrition

A core challenge for pecans has been perception. While widely enjoyed, they have often been seen as a seasonal or discretionary purchase rather than a staple food. APC addressed this by investing in credible nutrition research and amplifying those findings to consumers.

A major milestone was the promotion of an APC-funded Penn State study examining the relationship between pecans, cholesterol levels and diet quality. The results gained widespread media attention, generating **3.5 billion potential impressions** across major outlets.

This type of exposure plays a critical role in shifting consumer behavior and positioning pecans as a health-forward, everyday snack. For growers, that shift supports stronger, more consistent demand and improved long-term value.

Expanding Global Opportunities

APC also delivered significant returns through its export strategy. By securing \$1.3 million in federal grant funding¹, the organization expanded its international marketing efforts and extended its reach into key growth markets.

The impact was substantial:

- **India:** Among the retailers APC partnered with in 2025, the average sales lift for pecans both at physical and online retail outlets was over 100%.²

- **United Kingdom:** Promotions across thousands of stores increased baseline sales by 64%, with spikes up to 130% during actual promotional periods.³

- **Germany:** Efforts to establish APC's retail footprint in Germany saw partnerships with more than 600 stores and an average sales lift of 71% in promotional locations.⁴

These results highlight APC's ability to not only enter new markets, but to generate real, measurable demand within them.

Delivering Actionable Industry Data

In addition to marketing, APC continues to strengthen its role as the industry's central source of market intelligence. Through required handler reporting, the organization collects critical data on shipments, inventory, and trade.

In 2025, that data was transformed into practical tools, including monthly Industry Position Reports, dynamic data dashboards, and independent economic

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analysis. These resources help growers and handlers better understand market conditions and make more strategic decisions.

Strengthening the Industry as a Whole

APC's impact extends across the entire supply chain. Work on food safety, grades and standards, and export compliance is reinforcing the premium reputation of American Pecans globally.

At the same time, new services are helping industry stakeholders compete more effectively. A redesigned AmericanPecan.com now serves as a central hub for data and resources, while digital marketing consultations and expanded communications provide practical support to businesses throughout the sector.

A Worthwhile Investment

The return on investment in APC is increasingly visible. From real data insights for business to triple-digit sales growth during promotional periods in emerging markets, the organization is delivering outcomes that directly support demand and profitability.

Equally important, APC is building a more resilient industry, one that is informed by data, aligned across the supply chain, and positioned to compete globally.

In a challenging and evolving market, that combination of immediate results and long-term strategy makes a compelling case: your investment dollars in APC are being put to work in ways that truly matter.

¹APC FY25 Budget

²Proprietary data from retailers obtained by SS Associates, India, based on the FY25 fiscal year (Oct. 2024-Sept 2025).

³Proprietary data obtained by The Garden Marketing & PR, based on the FY25 fiscal year (Oct. 2024-Sept 2025).

⁴Proprietary data obtained by The Garden Marketing & PR, based on sampling programs held from June-Sept 2025. 🌰

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Not bad for a little nut.



1:1 Funding

APC doubled international funding in 2025 by applying for government grants.¹



Mining the Data

A new website, market analyses and dynamic graphs offer broader insights into the pecan crop reserves and global export opportunities.



Global Expansion

India: Over 100% average sales increase at physical and online retail stores.²

U.K.: A 64% increase in pecan sales, with a 130% increase during actual promotional periods.³

Germany: New partnerships with 600+ stores and an average sales increase of 71% in promotional locations.⁴



¹APC FY25 Budget.

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³Proprietary data obtained by The Garden Marketing & PR, based on the FY25 fiscal year (Oct. 2024-September 2025).

⁴Proprietary data obtained by The Garden Marketing & PR, based on sampling programs held from June-September 2025 across 599 stores.



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NATIONAL Pecan MONTH

By Scout Weesner, GPGA Communications & Events Coordinator

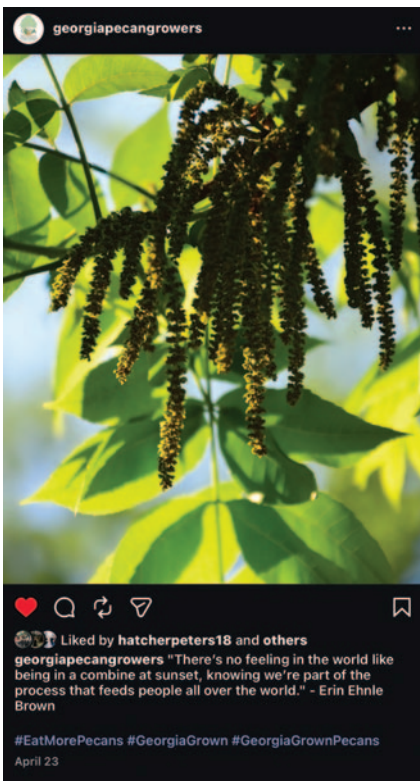
April is recognized as National Pecan Month, and while pecans are something we celebrate year-round, this year we took a few extra steps to highlight their versatility, flavor and nutritional value. Throughout the month, GPGA remained active on our social media platforms by sharing photos, recipes and fun facts, while also spotlighting promotional content from across the pecan industry.

This year we focused on sharing healthy and creative ways to enjoy pecans. Recipes such as Butternut Squash and Brussel Sprouts Pasta with Pecans showcased a fresh take on incorporating pecans into everyday meals. The 2026 Masters Golf Tournament even joined the conversation this year with a lighthearted de-



bate on the proper way to pronounce “pecan” -- bringing additional attention to Georgia’s state nut.

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One of the highlights of National Pecan Month for GPGA was hosting eight chef influencers from India for a Georgia Pecan Innovation Tour and trade mission. On April 14th, National Pecan Day, these chefs joined several Georgia growers in the orchard to cook with pecans and learn more about the industry. Hosting the event on-site created a direct connection between the product and its origin, allowing guests to experience both the agricultural and culinary sides of pecan production. The orchard provided the perfect backdrop to strengthen the relationship between growers and end users while showcasing the many ways pecans can be enjoyed across different cuisines and cultures.

Overall, National Pecan Month provided a meaningful opportunity to promote pecans through education, outreach and collaboration. By bringing together growers, chefs and

consumers, the month's activities helped strengthen the connection between agriculture and everyday use while continuing to highlight the value and versatility of Georgia pecans. 🌰



GPGA is pleased to introduce our *newest* BOARD MEMBER *Bryan Peters*



Following his election to the Board in March, Bryan jumped right into his duties, as he and his wife Cathy joined the team welcoming our Indian buyers during April's Georgia Pecan Innovation Tour and trade mission. He was also part of the Georgia delegation to D.C. during April's fly-in meetings with the Georgia Congressional delegation, speaking on behalf of those growers impacted by Hurricane Helene.

Born and raised in Quitman, Georgia, Bryan grew up on a family row crop farm and worked alongside his grandfather and uncle. He attended Valdosta State University and has been involved with Ag Nutrients, a fertilizer retailer, since 2009 and is currently their Georgia sales manager. He also farms 850 acres of pecans in Brooks, Lowndes and Lanier County and is president of GA Quality Pecan -- a co-owned cleaning plant. Bryan also serves on the Southeastern Pecan Growers Association Board.

Bryan and Cathy share three children and are members of Park Ave. Methodist Church.



We're proud to have Bryan's leadership, experience and passion for Georgia pecans on our GPGA Board!



Sugar Fried Pecans Selected for People's Choice Award

By Amy Howell, Copy Editor, *The Pecan Grower Magazine*

Georgia pecans were once again front and center at this year's Flavor of Georgia competition, with Ocmulgee Orchards' Sugar Fried Pecans earning the prestigious People's Choice Award at the University of Georgia's annual event. Since its launch in 2007, Flavor of Georgia has served as the state's premier food product competition, highlighting both emerging food entrepreneurs and established Georgia-made brands seeking recognition and expanded markets. This year, among 180 finalists spanning 12 categories, a pecan product captured the top audience honor. Since the competition began, more than 2,410 products have been entered.

Hosted by the Department of Food Science and Technology within the University of Georgia College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences (CAES), Flavor of Georgia recognizes market-ready foods and beverages made in Georgia. As a CAES Signature Event, the competition is supported by presenting sponsor Massey Ferguson along with the Georgia Department of Agriculture and Georgia Grown, the CAES Alumni Association, Farm Credit Associations of Georgia, Corteva Agriscience, the Georgia Agribusiness Council, and The Dairy Alliance.

Georgia pecans were strongly represented throughout this year's finals, appearing in six of the twelve competition categories:

Baked Goods

- *Pecan Blondies* by Peacock Orchards (Woodstock)
- *Sweet Potato Pecan Red Velvet Cake Cookies* by Yams Foods (Marietta)

Cakes

- *Pumpkin-Pecan Coffee Cake* by Flour Lady Bakery (Roswell)

Confections

- *Bourbon Caramel Turtles* by Maybird Confections (Alpharetta)

Dairy Products

- *Honey Peach Pecan Cream Cheese* by Now Schmeat This! (Austell)

- *Sweet Potato Pecan Chocolate Ice Cream Bar* by Yams Foods (Marietta)

Miscellaneous

- *Praline Pecan Butter* by Peacock Orchards (Woodstock)

Snack Foods

- *Sugar Fried Pecans* by Ocmulgee Orchards (Hawkinsville)
- *Glazed Pecans* by River Street Sweets (Savannah)



Final round judges included food product experts, community leaders, local businesses, and political representatives. Entries were evaluated on Georgia connection, commercial appeal, taste, innovation, and market potential. Finalists not only provided samples for judging but also delivered three-minute presentations highlighting their products and brands.

Beyond the competition itself, Flavor of Georgia provides significant promotional opportunities for participants. Every entry is included in the event's digital product directory, complete with professional photography and product descriptions viewed by food industry buyers and media outlets. Finalists also receive personalized news releases, permission to use the Flavor of Georgia finalist logo in marketing materials, and the opportunity to present directly to food industry professionals during final judging. Additionally, all finalists receive a one-year Georgia Grown membership courtesy of the Georgia Department of Agriculture. 🌰



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Maintaining the Effectiveness of Fungicides for Pecan Scab Management

By Johanna Wesche and Dr. Clemen Oliveira, Department of Plant Pathology, Coastal Plain Experiment Station, University of Georgia, 2630 Rainwater Rd Tifton, GA 31793

After the severe damage caused by Hurricane Helene in 2024, Georgia pecan growers entered the 2025 season already facing significant challenges. The very wet summer, combined with frequent rainfall events, created extremely favorable conditions for pecan scab development. In some orchards, scab remained a problem despite multiple fungicide applications throughout the season. As the number of fungicide sprays increases, rotating products with different modes of action (FRAC groups) becomes even more critical to help manage fungicide resistance and maintain effective disease control. However, under prolonged disease pressure and frequent spray schedules, maintaining effective rotations can become increasingly difficult for growers.

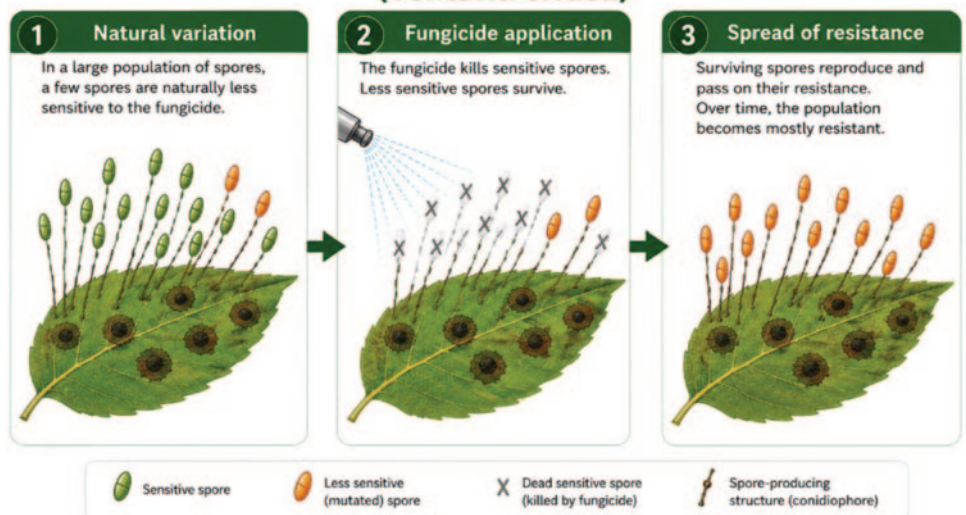
Spray programs in Georgia pecans typically begin with phosphite applications around bud break. Phosphites can affect the pathogen directly, but they mainly work against pecan scab by inducing host resistance in the plant, which makes them less prone to fungicide resistance development compared to many site-specific fungicides. These early applications are often followed by fungicide mixtures containing FRAC groups 11 + 3, and then rotations involving tin (fentin hydroxide) + Elast® (dodine) with Miravis Top® (FRAC 7 + 3). Resistance to dodine and fentin hydroxide is still considered uncommon in pecan scab populations. However, resistance or reduced sensitivity to other fungicide classes, including FRAC groups 3 and 11, is well documented in many plant pathogens, including pecan scab.

During the 2025 growing season, the high number of fungicide applications placed tremendous pressure on pecan scab spray programs across Georgia. As a result, some orchards experienced higher-than-expected levels of scab despite intensive management efforts. To better understand these control issues, we conducted surveys in commercial orchards across two of Georgia's major pecan-producing counties. These orchards experienced severe scab pressure on highly susceptible cultivars, despite a solid spray program. In-vitro testing of pecan scab samples collected from three orchards in 2025 and one orchard in 2026 showed evidence of reduced sensitivity to one of the active ingredients in Miravis Top®. While these findings are preliminary, they highlight the importance of continued monitoring and further evaluation over the coming seasons.

Miravis Top® has been one of the strongest-performing fungicides available for pecan scab management in recent years. However, it is also considered a higher-risk fungicide for resistance development, making fungicide rotation even more important moving into the 2026 season. Growers should rotate products with

Continued on Page 57, See Scab

How Fungicide Resistance Develops in Pecan Scab (*Venturia effusa*)



Scab, Continued from Page 56

different FRAC codes and follow label recommendations limiting FRAC 7 fungicides to no more than four total applications per season. This includes both Miravis Top® and Miravis Prime®, since both products contain pydiflumetofen, a FRAC 7 fungicide. In other words, alternating Miravis Top® with Miravis Prime® is not considered a true FRAC rotation and should be avoided. Growers should also avoid back-to-back applications of Miravis® products and instead alternate with other fungicide classes, such as Dodine® and Super Tin®.

Recent results from our 2025 pecan scab network trials conducted with county agents across Georgia continue to show strong performance from Dodine® and Super Tin® programs. These products will remain important rotational partners to help preserve the effectiveness of fungicides currently available for pecan scab management, including Miravis Top® and Miravis Prime®. We also greatly appreciate the continued support and collaboration of our county agents in conducting these trials across the state.

How Does Fungicide Resistance Develop?

Repeated applications of the same fungicide can gradually select for less sensitive pecan scab populations (Fig. 1). When a fungicide is applied, a few naturally less sensitive individuals may survive. This challenge is even greater in pecans because the large tree canopy can reduce spray coverage, especially in the upper canopy. If the same fungicide or mode of action is used repeatedly, these surviving individuals continue to survive and reproduce while more sensitive isolates are eliminated. Over time, this selection process can lead to reduced fungicide performance and resistance development.

This is why rotating fungicides classes is so important and also why many products are sold as mixtures of different FRAC groups. However, in some cases, pecan scab populations can develop resistance or reduced sensitivity to multiple FRAC groups at the same time. It is also important to mention that fungicide resistance is not always the same across orchards and fungicides should be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. Just because one orchard shows reduced sensitivity does not automatically mean another orchard will respond the same way. 🌰

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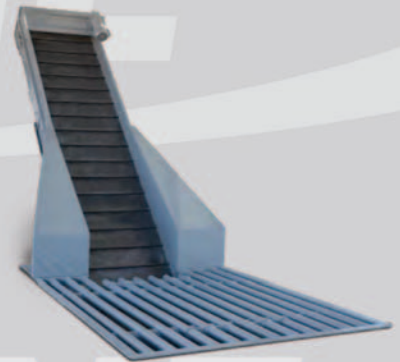
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