

Fruit Trees

and Pecan Trees



Select the Site

- Ideal Soil – Sandy Loam
- Ideal Site – Full sun, avoid low frost pockets
- Conduct Soil Drainage Test
 - Dig hole 8-10” x 30-36”
 - Fill with water
 - 24hr drainage = good
 - 36hr drainage = ok
 - 48hr drainage = no



Chill Hours are Vital

Chill hours = hours below 45 degrees
from November – February

Chill hours for the Big Country
= 800
(650-950)

Too few chill hours causes problems.

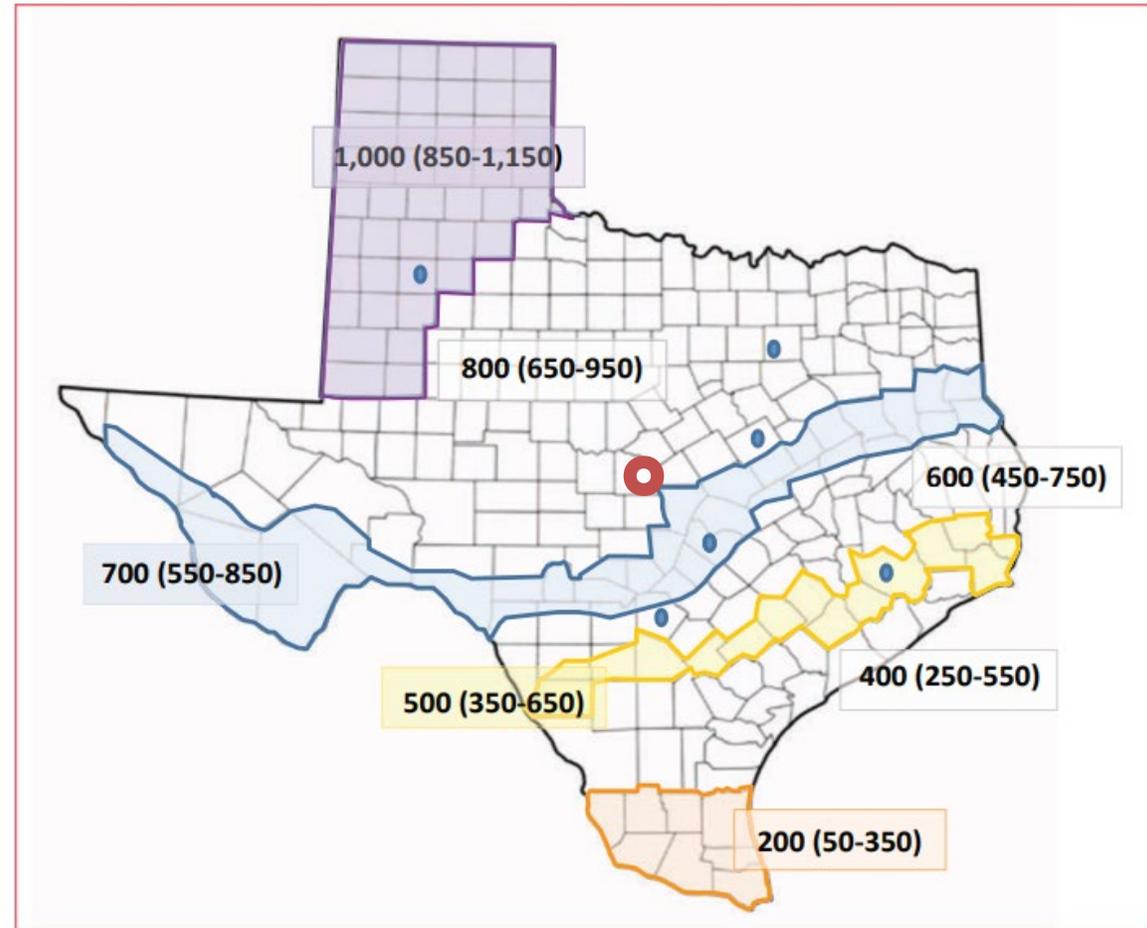


Figure 3. Average number of hours of winter chilling below 45° F in Texas.

Fruit Trees We Can Grow

- Apple
- Apricot
- Fig
- Jujube
- Peach, Pear, Plum
- Pecan



Selecting the Variety

- Very important. Our favorite trees may not grow here.
- Research. Which varieties grow best in this semi-arid, harsh summers and winters area of West Central Texas?
- Don't buy from box stores, unless ...

Apricot

- Needs good air flow
- Sandy loam soil or amended clay soil for drainage
- Winter pruning

Pros:

- moderately drought tolerant after established
- self pollinating, but do better with second variety nearby

Cons:

- early blossoming, trouble with late frosts
- sometimes trouble with peach borers, brown rot, aphids & mites

Varieties:

Katy - very low chill

- 300-400 hours
- large sweet fruit
- early blooming

Moorpark - 600-700 chill hours

- excellent flavor
- may struggle in mild winters

Gold Kist - low chill - 300-400 hrs

- good for warmer climates

Blenheim - 500 chill hours

- excellent flavor
- late blooming



Fig

- 100-200 chill hours
- Sandy loam soil or amended clay soil for drainage
- Winter prune to shape and remove dead/damage
- Plant in microclimate, or against south-facing wall
- Mulch to protect roots, conserve water
- Water consistently during fruiting

Pros:

- moderately drought tolerant after established
- love hot summers and mild winters

Cons:

- trouble with sudden cold snaps, though roots will survive
- leaf and fruit drop during extremely hot, dry spells
- squirrels, birds, wasp love figs -- netting fruit to protect to ripening

Varieties:

Celeste - small, sweet fruit

- large sweet fruit
- early blooming

Texas Everbearing (Brown Turkey)

- fairly tolerant of climate...
- good yields

Alma - great flavor

- best for warmer climates or protected space

LSU Purple - disease-resistant

- good flavor
- tender fruit



Apple

- 200-600 chill hours
- Full sun
- Deep sandy loam soil or amended clay soil for drainage
- Winter prune to shape and remove dead/damage
- Mulch to protect roots, conserve water
- Water consistently during fruiting, and during drought

Pros:

- some can handle hot summers

Cons:

- need enough chill hours
- trouble with hot summers
- fire blight, apple scab & codling moth issues



Varieties:

Granny Smith - 400-600 chill hours

- prolific producer
- great for baking, long storage
- does better w/ cross-pollinator
- fruit ripens in October

Fuji - 500-600 chill hours

- need to be cross-pollinated
- ripens in October - November

Gala - 500-600 chill hours

- need to be cross-pollinated
- ripens in July - August
- sweet, crisp

Anna - 200-300 chill hours

- sweet fruit early – May to June
- needs a similar cross-pollinator
- great for eating, pies, drying

Jujube

- 150-400 chill hours
- Needs full sun
- Sandy loam soil is best but needs good drainage
- Winter pruning of suckers & dead wood
- 10-15 feet spacing between trees
- Self-pollinating

Pros:

- drought tolerant after established
- self pollinating, but do better with second variety

Cons:

- young trees drop fruit
- requires a lot of pruning for root suckers
- deer and raccoons enjoy the fruit

Varieties:

Li - large, sweet fruit

- good fresh or dried
- large sweet fruit
- ripens early

Lang - pear-shaped

- tastes best dried
- need to be cross-pollinated

Sugar Cane - small thorny tree

- very sweet fruit
- good for warmer climates

Honey Jar - small crisp fruit

- very sweet for eating fresh



Peach

- 450 - 800 chill hours
- Needs full sun
- Sandy loam soil is best but will adapt, drainage essential
- Annual winter pruning for open center
- 10-15 feet spacing between trees
- Self-pollinating

Pros:

- mature quickly
- drought tolerant after established
- self-pollinating, but produce better with second variety

Cons:

- late frosts damage blossoms on the early bloomers
- peach tree borers & leaf curl problems

Varieties:

June Gold - 650 chill hours

- early ripener
- good for eating fresh

Harvester - 750 chill hours

- excellent for fresh eating
- ripens early

Texstar - 750 chill hours

- Texas A&M variety
- very reliable

Elberta - 800-950 chill hours

- very sweet for eating fresh & great for canning or freezing



Plum

- 300-600 chill hours
- Needs full sun
- Sandy loam soil is best, can tolerate some wet soils
- 10-15 feet spacing between trees, airflow essential
- Mulch and deep and infrequent watering

Pros:

- drought tolerant after established
- self-pollinating, but produce better with second variety

Cons:

- peach tree borers
- Plum curculio

Varieties:

Warren - 300 chill hours

- generous & reliable production
- medium size sweet juicy fruit

Ayres - 150-250 chill hours

- dark purple juicy fruit
- heat & drought tolerant

Asian - 500 chill hours

- large, red fruit
- resistant to disease

Moonglow - 650- 800 chill hours

- large round red fruit
- requires cross-pollinator



Pear

- 450 - 800 chill hours
- Needs full sun
- Sandy loam soil is best, good drainage essential
- Annual winter pruning for air flow & shape
- 10-15 feet spacing between trees
- Need cross-pollinators

Pros:

- drought tolerant after established
- self-pollinating, but produce better with second variety

Cons:

- Trouble with fire blight, except for Orient



Varieties:

Keiffer – 400-500 chill hours

- heat tolerant
- good for eating fresh & canning

Ayers – 300-400 chill hours

- handles heat & drought
- ripens early with sweet fruit

Orient – 350-400 chill hours

- very good in hot, dry areas
- large, round, firm

Moonglow - 600-700 chill hours

- smooth soft fruit
- needs a cross-pollinator

Warren - 750 chill hours

- excellent for fresh eating
- ripens early

Pecan Trees



Native to creeks and rivers
Need good soil

Pecan varieties

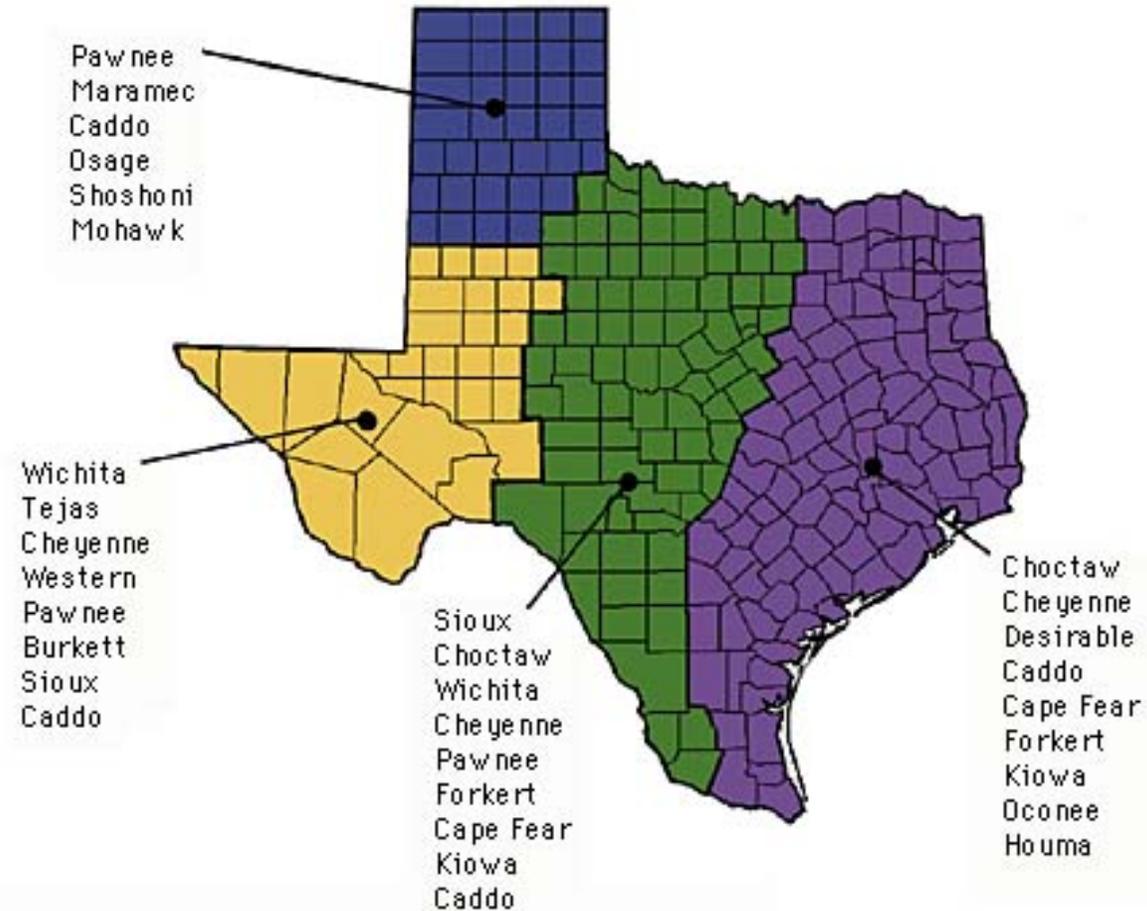


Figure 1. Pecan varieties recommended for home planting in Texas.

Pecans

- Plant 50 – 75 feet apart. If the limbs touch the roots touch.
- If the roots touch there is complication for available water and soil nutrients
- Fertilizer – April, May, June, July?
- Yard trees – 21-0-0
- Major pests – Pecan nut casebearer - Spray late May, September
 - Pecan weevil – Emerge in August after a rain, spreading across the state rapidly

****Zinc**

- Best homeowner variety
- Small nut
- High quality
- Beautiful tree



- Best tree for nut
- Consistent
- Good quality



Key To Pecan Management

- Nitrogen fertilizer
- Water



Acknowledgements

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension articles

Scott Anderson, CEA-AG, Brown County

Links:

<https://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu>

<https://agrilifetoday.tamu.edu>

<https://blog.txfb-ins.com>



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