



Georgia Pecan Nut News *Winter 2009*

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Poultry Litter and Pecans

Lenny Wells

Poultry litter has proven to be an excellent source of nutrients for pecans. Because much of the N in poultry litter becomes available slowly throughout the year, applications should be made in late February or March. Release of P and K is relatively rapid. For orchards utilizing clover, March applications are preferable because the clover is a little larger and may be better able to take the litter application if the litter is a little "hot". Depending on the source, poultry litter may have from 40-70 lbs N per ton, so have an analysis run on your litter and adjust your rate per acre accordingly. Litter analysis is free for growers through the extension service. Contact your county agent for sampling instructions.

Poultry litter may sometimes seem to possess magical qualities in its effects on plant growth and production. Much of this is likely due to the added benefit of building organic matter in the soil and providing better availability of macro and micronutrients. In fact, micronutrient deficiencies are rare where manure is routinely used on acid soils. Animal manures also improve soil structure, increase moisture holding capacity, and provide a higher degree of biological diversity in the soil.

Until you have applied litter routinely to the orchard for three or four years, you

Clover and Weed Management

Lenny Wells

Its time for herbicide applications to help suppress weed competition in orchards utilizing clover. This can be a difficult task where weeds like wild radish, etc. already have a head start. Rye-grass as well can quickly get ahead of clover. Where broadleaf weeds are an issue (wild radish, etc.) apply 1 pint of 2,4-D *amine* + 1 pint of crop oil. You may see some burning and a little stunting of the clover, but it should recover. Apply 1 pint of Poast + 1 pint of crop oil to suppress rye-grass. Where broadleaf weeds and rye-grass are a problem, simply mix the Poast in with the 2,4-D *amine* and the crop oil.

Keep in mind that if you utilize clover in pecan orchards, you will need to keep a close eye on your K and P levels, as clover will use these elements as well and can deplete soil levels if they are not maintained.

will probably still need some additional N (30-50 lbs) applied in the “on” year. Based on recent results, I would suggest making this application using a liquid N solution (i.e. 28%, etc.) applied via injection or through the herbicide sprayer in the herbicide strip and over the drip emitters in June or late August/early September.

The bottom line for chicken litter on pecans is: *if you can get it, use it*. Just be sure to apply litter before June in order to prevent any potential nut contamination issues.

Organic Pecans?

Lenny Wells

Conventional pecan production in our part of the world faces many challenges, including insects, disease, weeds, etc. Although organic food production has become popular in the last few years and organic products often command a premium price, organic pecan production, especially in the south, is a difficult task. But, is it impossible?

We currently have several cultivars available that could be produced with very low inputs. These include Elliott, Excel, Lakota, McMillan, and Amling. USDA researchers in Texas have been working on organic pecan production since 2002 and have had some interesting results.

Their organic system was based, as are most organic systems, on soil management. I believe this is something that should be done in any orchard---*organic or conventional*. Joe Bradford, lead scientist of the study sought to improve tree health by improving soil health, expecting the trees to be more resistant to disease and insect attack.

Using Caddo, Cheyenne, Desirable, Pawnee, and Wichita, they applied organic amendments throughout the year. All of

these varieties are scab susceptible, and some have proven to scab horribly in conventional sprayed orchards. Contrary to many expectations, the organically treated trees out-yielded conventional trees in each year of the study.

Even if you are not interested in growing pecan organically, there are important lessons to be learned here. There are aspects of the organic system that can be utilized in conventional systems to improve production. Most notably, this involves management of soil health. Details about the USDA organic pecan project can be found at <http://www.ars.usda.gov/is/AR/archive/nov08/pecans1108.htm>

Ambrosia Beetles

Will Hudson

With the mild weather earlier in January, some ambrosia beetle activity has already been noticed in some orchards. The cold that followed will put them off for a while, but we always have a big emergence of the Asian (now called granulate) ambrosia beetle in late February or early March. Young trees are vulnerable to attack even if they are not obviously stressed, especially during the green-up period. Prompt action can save these trees if the number of attacks (frass "toothpicks") is less than 4-5 per tree. Spray with a pyrethroid (permethrin has worked well, and others will also do the job), being careful to cover the trunk completely. Monitor the trees for signs of wilting of the new leaves, a sign that a pathogen has been introduced. Once the wilting starts, the tree is probably done for. If you see toothpicks on larger trees, there is something seriously wrong with the tree. If attacks are confined to one limb, pruning is an option. If the attacks are on the main stem it's probably time to consider removal.

DATES TO REMEMBER

Pecan Scout School
March 4, 2009
University of Georgia
Tifton Campus Conference Center

8:00-8:30 Registration (Coffee & Donuts)

8:30-9:30 Recognizing and Correcting Pecan Nutritional and Cultural Problems—
Dr. Lenny Wells, UGA Horticulture

9:30-10:30 Pecan Diseases---Jason Brock,
UGA Plant Pathology

10:30-11:00 Break (Refreshments Provided)

11:00-12:00 Pecan Insects—Dr. Will Hudson, UGA Entomology

Commercial and
Private Pesticide Credits Available

Southeastern Pecan Growers Association
Annual Meeting
Sandestin Golf & Beach Resort
Destin, Fla.
February 20-21, 2009

Georgia Pecan Growers Association
Annual Meeting
Georgia National Fairgrounds
Perry, GA
May 7, 2009

County Production Meeting Dates

<i>Peach Co.</i>	<i>Feb 10</i>
<i>Irwin Co.</i>	<i>Feb 12</i>
<i>Crisp Co.</i>	<i>Feb. 17</i>
<i>Emmanuel Co.</i>	<i>Feb. 23</i>
<i>Thomas Co.</i>	<i>March 5</i>
<i>Dougherty/Lee</i>	<i>March 12</i>
<i>Berrien Co.</i>	<i>March 13</i>
<i>Appling Co.</i>	<i>March 26</i>
<i>Lee Co. Update</i>	<i>June 9</i>

Contact your county extension agent for specific times and locations of county meetings

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