



OKLAHOMA PECAN GROWERS ASSOCIATION

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Michael Smith, Editor

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In This Issue

- *President's Corner* - pg. 1
- *A Recap of the 2007 Western Pecan Growers Association Conference* - pg. 2
- *Vegetation-control is Essential in Young Orchards* - pg. 2
- *Early Considerations for Pecan Production – Horticultural oils and pecan pests* - pg. 4
- *Time to order Pecan Nut Case-bearer Traps* - pg. 4
- *Talking Tree Tells Tall Tales in Tulsa* - pg. 5
- *Incentives to Buy and Sell Poultry Litter* - pg. 6
- *2007 Pecan Graftwood Sources* - pg. 8
- *Classified Ads* - pg. 9



President's Corner

Robert Schoenecke

It only seems like a week ago that I was writing the January news article; however, at that time we were experiencing a lot of cold weather and ice. It appears that the eastern part of the state was the hardest hit with the most damage. We tend to think that disasters don't happen at home or that "I'm glad that didn't happen to me". It all becomes more personal when it does happen to you or a disaster occurs. For those producers who have experienced this storm damage, let me encourage you to keep looking ahead into another year and work as you have in the past because there will be a lot to learn from this experience. Remember that adversity will make us either bitter or better and it is up to us as to which it will be.

In the last article I mentioned a meeting with a representative of USDA Rural Development concerning Value-Added and Energy grants. The press release with the contact names and phone numbers were included in the January newsletter on page 9. These are competitive grants and have a application deadline of March 31. Time frame is quite short for the current year; however, if you are interested, the time to begin working for next year is now because the application process is quite lengthy.

As spring time fast approaches, we tend to look forward to budbreak and how this year's crop will look. We often hear or read articles that will forecast the crop and what might happen within the weather conditions. As I look at some of these articles and consider the outlook of the 2007 crop I become very encouraged and look forward to the coming year. It appears that many of the early conditions have been met to give us the promise of a good crop. We must have hope and faith in those conditions we cannot control and act on those management decisions that we can control.

The OPGA Board of Directors recently met, putting the final touches together for the 2007 Annual Meeting and Show, and I would like to encourage you to make plans now to attend. The information will be coming out very soon and I think you will agree that it will be very informational, so mark your calendars for June 17-19 and make plans to come to Lawton for this event. Hope to see you there!



A Recap of the 2007 Western Pecan Growers Association Conference

Eric T. Stafne, Extension Horticulturist

I attended the 41st annual WPGA conference recently and was impressed by the attendance, knowledge, and scope of the program. The educational sessions were excellent and covered a wide range of topics. They were very informative and, although they focused mainly on the needs of growers from the western regions, a grower from Oklahoma could still learn a lot.

Tom Stevenson, President of the Southeastern Pecan Growers, opened off the festivities with an address on the changing times of the pecan industry. He covered subjects such as the need for national marketing, the importance of check-off programs to support the industry, and the influence of China in the coming years. He was followed by a cadre of pest management presentations, including pecan root knot nematodes (symptoms are poor canopy fill and poor leaf expansion; they are very host specific; chemical control has been unsuccessful; they occur in sandy soils), pecan nut casebearer (a state-wide volunteer program in Texas to monitor first generation PNC), black-margined aphid (control of black-margined aphid increases yield and quality; unclear relationship between control of PNC using broad spectrum insecticides and levels of black-margined aphid based on this study), and bacterial leaf scorch (host specific; exists in many different plants; sometimes not harmful, but sometimes devastating; caused by a bacterium – *Xylella fastidiosa*).

The afternoon sessions broached the topic of orchard management, so presentations on soil zinc application (zinc deficiency occurs more often in high pH soils; chelated zinc seems to potentially be better for soil applications, such as ZnDTPA and ZnEDTA), nitrogen fertilizers (volatilization most often occurs with ammonia-based fertilizers), nickel application (mouse ear symptoms; factors for deficiency include high pH soils, dry soil in the spring, cold soil in the spring, and heavy early spring applications of nitrogen), and orchard floor incorporation of pecan wood chips (chipping and incorporation of pecan wood does not appear to tie up nitrogen when done with a chipper/shredder, whereas sawdusting the wood will tie up the nitrogen in the orchard) were all covered before the break. Following the afternoon break, I covered winter chilling in pecans (pecans have fairly low chilling requirement; if not met in some southern areas then abnormal budbreak and growth can occur), the El Nino winter of 2006/2007 (a weak El Nino season this year), decreasing dust during

harvest (a prototype flow-through cyclone device that reduces dust during harvest and can be retrofitted to many harvester types), and a simple method for determining irrigation scheduling in the Mesilla Valley (called “The Pecanigator”, a slide rule-type device that lets a grower decide when to irrigate based on rainfall, previous irrigation date, and soil type).

The presentations continued on the second day as well. It started with a recap of the southeastern pecan industry (hurricanes and development have hampered the industry in recent years; from 1997 to 2002, pecan acreage in Alabama has decreased by more than 4500 acres, Louisiana has decreased by more than 3700 acres, and Georgia has lost nearly 6600 acres), followed by an overview of the western pecan industry (rapidly expanding, especially in Arizona and New Mexico; major issues are development and water availability; from 1997 to 2002, pecan acreage in California decreased 1200 acres, Arizona increased by 4000 acres, New Mexico grew 6000 acres, and west Texas increased by 2000 acres; many growers are planting Pawnee in areas of New Mexico; New Mexico was the number one pecan producing state in 2006 with 46 million pounds), effects of pecans on New Mexico’s economy (direct effects – 70 million dollars, total effects – 126 million dollars in 2003), and water supply outlook for pecan producers in the southwestern U.S. (some areas looking OK, some not so good due to droughty conditions; water is an extremely important issue for pecan producers in this region). I was unable to attend the last session on Orchard Floor Management, because I needed to get back to the airport for my return flight home.

Overall it was a great experience and I learned a lot. I hope to incorporate many of the things I learned into the Pecan Management Short Course this year and upcoming years.

Vegetation-control is Essential in Young Orchards

Michael Smith, Research Horticulturist

Controlling vegetation around young pecan trees is absolutely essential to achieve a high survival rate and rapid tree growth. This was clearly demonstrated by a study at the Cimarron Valley Research Station (formerly the Pecan & Fruit Research Station) near Perkins.

A study was designed to determine the optimum size of a vegetation-free area surrounding young pecan trees. The soil at the site was a Teller sandy loam. Trees were planted in March 2000 using 6 ft. tall bareroot ‘Kanza’ on Giles

rootstock. The ground cover was bermudagrass. Treatments were vegetation-free circles surrounding the tree that were 0, 3, 6, 12 or 24 feet in diameter (Fig. 1). Each treatment was replicated 12 times. The treatments were maintained with an annual application of Surflan (preemergence herbicide) and glyphosate (postemergence herbicide) applied as needed to maintain the area vegetation-free. Trees were irrigated as needed to avoid water stress using solid set sprinkler irrigation, and fertilized annually following standard practices.

The size of the vegetation-free area did not affect tree growth the 1st (Fig. 2) or 2nd year (data not shown). Frequently, transplanted trees make little top growth during the 1st and sometimes the 2nd year, but root growth is usually substantial. During the 3rd year, trees with at least a 3 ft. diameter vegetation-free circle surrounding the tree were larger than those with no vegetation control (Fig. 2). By the end of the 4th growing season, at least a 6 ft diameter vegetation-free circle was required for maximum tree growth (data not shown). In both the 5th and 6th growing seasons, trees in the 24 ft. diameter circle were larger than other size vegetation-free circles. Compared to no vegetation control, trees in the 24 ft diameter circle were 18% larger. During the 6th growing season, trees with no vegetation control produced about 0.15 lbs/tree and those in the 24 ft diameter circles yielded 0.4 lbs/tree of pecans.



Fig. 1. Three-year-old pecan tree in vegetation-free circle.

It is obvious from this data that as the trees grow, their roots invade larger soil volumes, and young trees benefit from larger areas without competition. However, as the vegetation-free size increases, erosion susceptibility increases. Vegetation also aids orchard traffic, harvest, and tends to maintain cooler temperatures in the orchard. Water infiltration rates can be reduced after years of maintaining soil without vegetation. The best initial growth rate can be achieved by minimizing or eliminating competition. The optimum size for each situation is likely to change with tree age and mitigated by prevailing orchard conditions.

Several herbicides are available to aid in vegetation control. These are discussed in OSU Current Report “Weed Control in Pecans, Apples and Peaches” <http://pods.dasnr.okstate.edu/docushare/dsweb/Get/Document-1017/CR-6242web.pdf>.

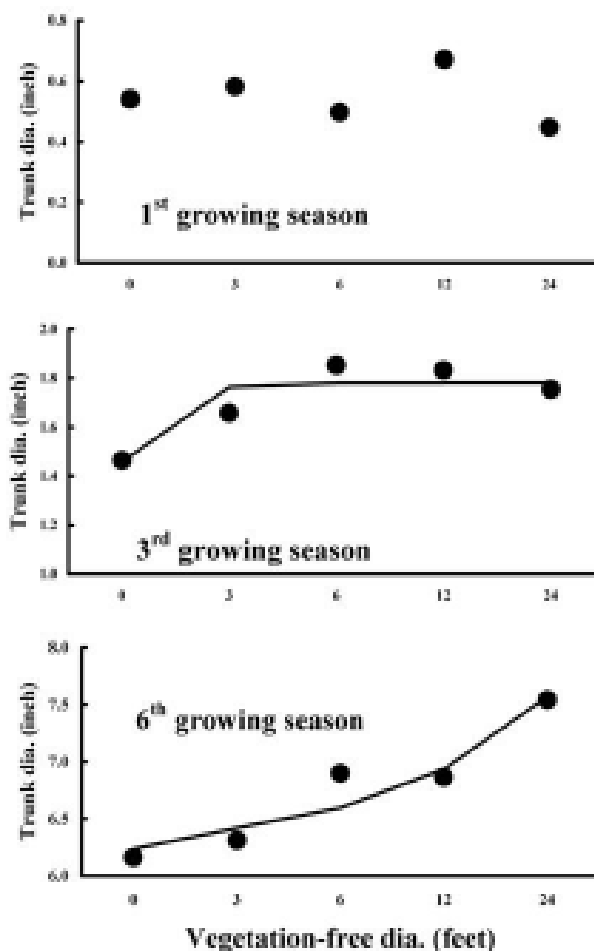


Fig. 2. The effect of vegetation-free diameter on the trunk diameter of ‘Kanza’ pecan trees after their 1st, 3rd and 6th growing seasons.

Early Considerations for Pecan Production – Horticultural oils and pecan pests

Phil Mulder, OSU Extension Entomologist

By the time you receive this newsletter most of the pecans will have initiated budbreak (generally by April 1 of each year in Oklahoma). Some of our growers in southern Oklahoma have brought up two other important considerations that need mentioning in this newsletter. First, is horticultural oil a good choice for phylloxera control and if so, when should I make such an application? The second concern they often voice is about scale insects.

Please keep in mind that management of these two organisms can be considered separately or together, depending on how you choose to manage the problem.

Either problem is not something that should be managed prophylactically each year. If you had trees with phylloxera galls last spring and summer, the time to treat those this year is after budbreak, when there is 1-2 inches of new growth. On the other hand, if you have trees that have scale insects infesting the bark of branches, then the timing for treatment is before budbreak. Now the question that arises is how can you control both species at the same time? First, keep in mind that these problems will not cause tree death or decline in just one season. Their presence in one season; however, may trigger a treatment decision for the next year.

The phylloxera that attack pecan consists of three species, two of which feed on leaves. The third species, *Phylloxera devastatrix* causes galls to form on the woody portion of current season's growth. This includes stems, leaf petioles and developing nuts. In May of each year, these galls split open, releasing winged adults. Heavy infestations of the latter species can cause premature leaf drop (when petioles are infested), prevent nuts from maturing (when immature nuts are infested), or can limit production and stress trees (when stems are infested). These aphid-like organisms do not create the galls on pecan; however, their presence and feeding causing the tree to react by forming a gall around the "stem mothers" that settle on the new growth and begin feeding in April.

Scale insects are extremely common on several different ornamental plants; however, the most commonly encountered species on pecan is the obscure scale, *Melanaspis obscura*. It attacks many plants related to pecans, including hickory and walnut. This insect is quite reclusive and never really draws much attention till its numbers approach damaging levels. Unfortunately, by that time they have created several layers of overlapping waxy scales

that can withstand insecticide application. This is why dormant season oil treatment is the best approach for controlling this pest.

If control for both or these insects is desired with a single application, then several factors should be considered. The timing for the best control is not in synchrony and standard air-blast sprayers will not adequately control scale insects (particularly heavy infestations of obscure scale). If the desire is to use a dormant season application to control both pests then use a high-powered spray gun, directing heavy amounts of dormant oil at the terminal ends of tree limbs and also onto the main stems and trunk of the tree. Dormant season sprays do not have residual activity and the primary mode of action associated with these applications deals with suffocation or entrapment. Oils can also penetrate insect eggs and young and interfere with metabolic processes (respiration). While these oils may be relatively effective against scale insects, their effectiveness against phylloxera is rather limited because of the timing of the treatment and the amount of liquid it requires to be effective.

Postponing application of dormant oils till after budbreak, when phylloxera is more prevalent, is a BIG MISTAKE! Pecan is considered an oil sensitive crop, therefore ONLY DORMANT SEASON application is recommended. In addition, excellent agitation is a must when applying horticultural oils. Once again, because pecan is an oil sensitive crop and because oils will have a strong tendency to settle out in the tank, it is imperative that constant agitation be provided when using these materials.

Time to order Pecan Nut Casebearer Traps

Phil Mulder, OSU Extension Entomologist

Provided below is a listing of those locations where pecan nut casebearer traps and pheromone may be ordered. These traps should be placed in the orchard by May 1 for southern Oklahoma and no later than May 15 for northern parts of the state. While we are continuing to work on the utility of these traps, we have not yet developed thresholds using capture numbers. These serve as another tool to help you anticipate the arrival of damaging larval populations and should be used in conjunction with the casebearer model (<http://agweather.mesonet.ou.edu/models/pecanut/default.html>) to help you determine when the most likely time for first significant nut entry will occur. Neither of these tools should replace scouting for larval damage and/or eggs at the end of May to first of June.

Pecan Nut Casebearer Pheromone and Trap Sources:

Advanced Pheromone Technologies, Inc.
 P.O. Box 417
 Marylhurst, OR 97036-0417
 Ph: 315-299-2598
 toll free: 877-244-9610
 fax: 971-327-8407
 email: infoatapt@comcast.net

Gempler's
 P.O. Box 270
 100 Countryside Drive
 Belleville, WI 53508
 Order by Phone: 1-800-382-8473
 Order by Fax: 1-800-551-1128

Great Lakes IPM Inc.
 10220 Church Road
 Vestaburg, MI 48891-9746
 Ph: 989-268-5693 or 989-268-5911
 Toll Free: 1-800-235-0285
 Fax: 989-268-5693
 E-mail: glipm@nethawk.com

ISCA Technologies / Monitor Technologies
 P.O. Box 5266
 Riverside, California 92517
 United States of America
 Tel: 951-686-5008
 Fax: 815-346-1722
 email: info@iscatech.com
 Web: www.iscatech.com

Oliver Pecan Co. Inc.
 1402 W. Wallace, San Saba, TX 76877
 800-657-9291
 E-mail: soliver@centex.net

Pape Pecan House
 P.O. Box 1281
 101 S. Hwy 123 Bypass
 Seguin, TX 78155
 Ph: 830-379-7442

Southern Nut 'n Tree Equipment, Inc and Pecan Producers, Inc.
 324 SH 16 South
 Goldthwaite, TX 76844
 1-800-527-1825
 Fax: 325-938-5490
 E-mail: sales@pecans.com

Trece, Inc.
 P.O. Box 129
 Adair, OK 74330
 Ph: 918-785-3061
 Fax:: 918-785-3063
 Email: custserv@trece.com
 Order Center: 866-785-1313

Talking Tree Tells Tall Tales in Tulsa

Sue Gray, Tulsa County OSU Extension

Remus, the talking pecan tree, found his way to Tulsa last month to tell kids all about pecans and how they are grown. This animatronic tree was loaned to us by the Texas A&M Agriculture Economics Department as part of our joint agriculture education program for school children. "Kids Kows and More" teaches children about pecans, cotton, wheat, sheep/wool, beef and dairy cattle, soybeans and hog production. It's taught in a lively format with real life examples when possible. Southwest Dairy Cooperative is a major underwriter, also providing the mobile dairy classroom and milk for the children.

A Tulsa Fairgrounds indoor arena was turned into a mini-crop and livestock exhibition for the children, teaching around 300 kids where and how their food is grown.

For the first time, we featured pecans.

I had the chance to have an interactive "conversation" with Remus, the pecan tree. We shared interesting facts about pecans with the children as well as a lively video showing how they are grown, harvested and processed. His bark is a rubbery material that moves when he speaks.

We had shelled and in-shell pecans on display and a showcase of various pecan foods that are available from local grocers.

Next year, the program will also be taught in Ottawa County. Hopefully, Remus will pay us another visit to share even more with the kids.

Some ideas we have for improving the presentation are as follows:

Have a real pecan tree/branch on site with shucks attached.

Demonstrate a pecan cracker.

Serve samples of pecans

This idea was frowned upon by a person concerned about nut allergies. The Texans serve their children pecans and the teachers usually know which child has the allergies.

If any growers have additional suggestions for making the experience (in late February) more meaningful for the kids, we are open to suggestions. Those can be passed along to us by calling or e-mailing me in Tulsa: sgray@tulsacounty.org

918-746-3717

Our goal for next year is to reach 1,000 school children at the event in Tulsa.



Remus the Talking Pecan Tree

Incentives to Buy and Sell Poultry Litter

Concern about excess animal waste in some watersheds continues to make headlines near the poultry growing areas of eastern Oklahoma and western Arkansas. Stronger enforcement of regulations and threats of new litigation have increased pressure on growers to transfer

poultry litter out of these areas to areas of soil phosphorus deficiency. At the same time, commercial fertilizer prices have risen significantly. This is opening new opportunities for litter marketing. There have been many new postings on the Oklahoma Litter Market website (www.ok-littermarket.org), and contacts with earlier listings indicate increasing sales of litter outside the poultry growing areas. To stimulate the market, three incentive or subsidy programs are currently available in Oklahoma.

Subsidies to poultry producers, haulers

In the Oklahoma portions of Spavinaw Creek and Illinois River watersheds, covering portions of Adair, Cherokee and Delaware counties, a direct payment will be made to producers for their litter and to service providers to offset hauling costs. The state, the EPA, and poultry companies fund this program cooperatively through the Oklahoma Conservation Commission (OCC).

BMPs, Inc., a private contractor in Farmington, AR, manages the program. They pay poultry producers a minimum of \$2/ton for their litter. Haulers currently receive \$0.05 (5 cents) per ton per loaded mile, up to \$8 per ton (up to 160 miles). For trips under 160 miles, the unused mileage subsidy will be added to the \$2/ton litter payment to the poultry producer. So for example, if the litter buyer is 100 miles from the loading point, the hauler would receive \$5/ton and the poultry producer would get the \$2 minimum + \$3 unused hauling subsidy for a total of \$5/ton.

Growers and haulers who wish to participate in this program must be signed up with Sheri Herron, of BMPs, Inc. Currently, BMPs is coordinating all transactions between buyers, sellers and haulers. The BMPs, Inc. toll-free number is 866-304-2784. Or visit their website at: <http://www.litterlink.com>.

To be eligible for payments, the litter must come from the Spavinaw Creek or Illinois River watersheds and must be applied by certified applicators on row crops, pasture, forage, or forestlands. There are some restrictions on areas where litter subsidized by this program can be applied. Contact BMPs, Inc. for details.

Incentives for non-poultry producers

For agriculture producers who are not poultry growers, two incentive programs are now available.

The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) statewide funding pool for manure transfer is operated by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and continuous signup is available at local NRCS field offices in the Eastern Half of Oklahoma. Signups were accepted

until November 15, 2006 for funding in 2007. Signups after that date will be for 2008. Manure (litter) must originate from state-designated Scenic River watersheds and Nutrient Limited watersheds extending into Arkansas and Oklahoma and must be applied to cropland or pastureland in Oklahoma outside of these watersheds (see NLW, below).

Eligible applicants must not have purchased or applied animal manure on land they have owned or operated at any time in the past 3 years, and they must plan and implement a Nutrient Management Plan (NMP). This is a competitive program; the ranking scale is based on destination of poultry litter, soil test phosphorus level, and land application technique (surface applied vs. incorporated or injected). Incentive payments range from \$4.50 to \$12.00/ton, depending on the distance the manure is hauled. The program was funded for a total of \$200,000 for 2007.

Oklahoma State Tax Credit: A second incentive available to litter buyers is a tax credit of \$5 per ton of litter purchased and transported, to be credited against the buyer's Oklahoma state income tax. The credit was established by H.B. 2218, signed by the Governor in 2004, and became effective January 1, 2005. If the tax credit due to an individual exceeds the amount of income tax he/she owes, the unused credit may be carried over for up to 5 years. This program is funded at \$375,000 annually.

The following is excerpted from the OK Tax Commission (OTC) rule, OAC 710:50-15-95:

“In order to qualify for the credit, the poultry litter must be:

1. purchased from a registered Oklahoma-based poultry operation located within an environmentally sensitive and nutrient-limited watershed [NLW-see below];
2. used or spread in a watershed that is not environmentally sensitive and nutrient-limited, and
3. applied by a certified poultry waste applicator.”

A written Animal Waste Management Plan or Conservation Plan was required in an OTC draft rule in 2005. The final OTC rule does not contain that requirement. However, it is recommended that farm operators considering this credit consult with their local NRCS Conservationist so an appropriate management plan can be documented.

The OTC has included the Poultry Litter Tax Credit in their tax form #511 CR, “Schedule for Other Credits”, for

filing with the 2006 state income tax return. This is available on the Internet at

<http://www.tax.ok.gov/it2006/511-CR-06.pdf>.

No other required documentation is mentioned in the OTC rule. However, it is recommended that in addition to an A WMP, claimants should keep invoices documenting the place of origin of the litter, where and by whom it was spread, and scale tickets showing the net tonnage. Producers should consider consulting with a tax advisor before purchasing litter based on expectation of this credit.

Regardless of incentive or subsidy, the law requires that litter must be applied by a Certified Commercial or Private Applicator, and a soil test report must be provided for all application sites. A recent litter test should also be supplied by the applicator.

Remember that subsidies alone do not make litter a good economic or environmental choice. The nutrient requirements of the soil and crop must be considered along with the nutrient contents and total cost of the litter. The best tools for this purpose are the OCES Soil Test Interpretation and Fertilizer Decision Support program and Fertilizer Blending and Cost Calculator available on the Internet at:

<http://www.soiltesting.okstate.edu/interpretation.htm>

Nutrient Limited (NLW) and Scenic River Watersheds

It is best to consult with your local NRCS to determine whether a particular site is in a NLW or Scenic River watershed. However, the NLW and Scenic River watersheds are listed in Appendix A of the Oklahoma Water Quality Standards, available from the Oklahoma Water Resources Board on the Internet at:

http://www.owrb.state.ok.us/util/rules/pdf_rul/Chap45.pdf.

A map showing currently designated NLW watersheds is available from the OWRB at:

http://www.owrb.state.ok.us/maps/pdf_map/Nutrient_Limited_Watersheds.pdf

A map showing the NRCS EQIP Manure Transfer Incentive Project Areas is available at: <ftp://ftp-fc.sc.egov.usda.gov/OK/programs/eqip/fy07/ManureMap.pdf>





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NEW PECAN BOOK — by Wes Rice., Pecans - Volume II, A Grower's Perspective.

Color pictures and descriptions of over 80 cultivars, including Oklahoma releases. Updates on all facets of pecan culture. Over 350 color pictures. Perfect bound — \$32.95 + 2.50 S&H and 8% sales tax or AG exemption. Hard cover — \$46.95 + 3.00 S&H + 8% sales tax or AG exemption. Wes Rice, 580-765-7049, 333 Braden School Rd., Ponca City, OK 74604

Membership Application

We invite you to become a member of the Oklahoma Pecan Growers' Association. Membership includes the *OPGA Newsletter*, *Pecan South* and *Pecan Grower*. Make your checks payable to OPGA and mail to:

Oklahoma Pecan Growers' Association
Janice Landgraf, Treasurer
RR 1 Box 148
Madill, OK 73446
okpecan@trinex.net (580) 795-7644

Name _____

Street Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Phone () _____ email: _____

Renew

New Member

Grower Member \$50.00
 Industry Member \$125.00
 Extension/Research/Student \$40.00

Return Service Requested

Oklahoma Pecan Growers' Association
c/o Horticulture & Landscape Architecture
Oklahoma State University
360 Agricultural Hall
Stillwater, OK 74078-6027
