

# Oklahoma 4-H

## Did You Know? 10 Questions About Pecans



OSU EXTENSION  
4-H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT



1. Pecans are commercially grown in how many states?

- 15
- 25
- 50

2. The word "Pecan" is an Algonquin Indian word that means?

- Squirrel food
- Nut requiring a stone to crack
- Portable snack

3. Which oil has the most heart healthy polyunsaturated fats or Omega-3 & 6?

- Olive
- Pecan
- Canola

4. Pecans are graft compatible with what other type of nut tree?

- Walnut
- Hickory
- Almond

5. In 1988, the World's Largest Pecan Pie was made in Okmulgee, Oklahoma. It weighed \_\_\_ and measured \_\_\_ feet in diameter.

- 5 tons & 22 feet in diameter
- 11 ½ tons & 37 feet in diameter
- 16 ½ tons & 42 feet in diameter

6. A papershell pecan is?

- A pecan with a thin shell
- A pecan from a grafted tree
- Always better quality

7. Who grafted the first pecan trees?

- Antoine, a gardener just north of New Orleans in 1846
- George Washington near Philadelphia in 1776
- Spanish Colonists in Northern Mexico in 1711

8. Oklahoma produces on average enough pecans to make?

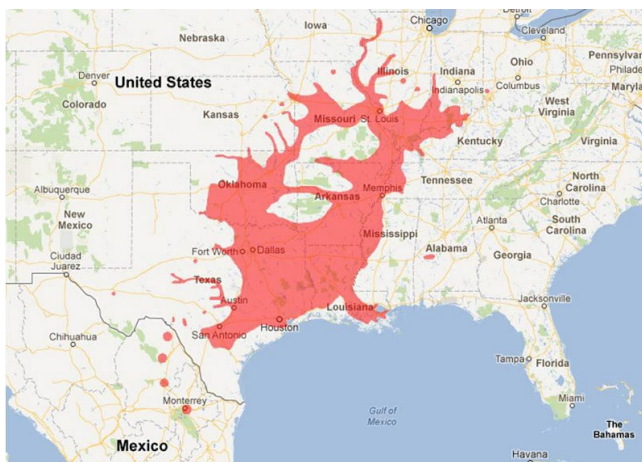
- 15,000,000 pecan pies
- 5,000,000 pecan pies
- 1,000,000 pecan pies

9. The nutmeat and coverings are called?

- Kernel, shell and shuck
- Nut, shell and husk
- Half, shell and husk

10. Why will pecans become rancid?

- High water content
- High oil content
- Low nutrition



The map to the left shows the native range for Pecan. All the other acreage grown in other states was introduced by man.

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### Answers:

1. Pecans are commercially grown in 15 states. Oklahoma ranks between 5<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> in total production behind Georgia, Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, and 2<sup>nd</sup> behind Texas in native pecan production.
2. The word pecan was originally “pakan” an Algonquin Indian word meaning “a nut requiring a stone to crack”. Pecan is a form of hickory and “pakan” was used for all types of hickory nuts. Later the French in Louisiana named the pecan “pecane”. Later the “e” was dropped.
3. Pecan oil is a somewhat new product that is low in saturated fats and high in Omega 3 & 6. It is very heart healthy and higher in these polyunsaturated fats than olive oil or canola oil. Pecans have the highest antioxidant capacity of all nuts.
4. Pecans, *Carya Illinonensis*, are members of the Hickory family. It is graft compatible with the Hickory, *Carya* species. Walnuts are *Juglans* species and almonds are *Prunus persica*.
5. The Guinness Book of World Records awarded the Pecan Festival at Okmulgee Oklahoma the honor of making the largest pecan pie in 1988. It weighed 16 ½ tons and was 40 feet in diameter. The festival also holds the records for largest pecan cookie that was 7,500 lbs and 32 feet in diameter and Largest Pecan Cookie and Ice Cream Party where they served 15,000 cookies and 5,000 servings of vanilla ice cream
6. A papershell pecan is a description for a pecan, not a type. It just means that the shell of the pecan is thinner than normal. Often people associate ‘papershell’ with an Improved Cultivar of pecan but many native pecans can have thin shells as well.
7. The first recorded grafting technique of pecans was accomplished by a slave gardener named Antoine from near New Orleans. He grafted a superior wild pecan to seedling pecan rootstocks. This clone was named ‘Centennial’. His planting of 126 Centennial trees was the first official planting of improved pecans.
8. Oklahoma on average produces about 17 million pounds of pecans. This would produce about 7,650,000 lbs of nutmeats or kernels. Pecans normally produce between 40-58 % nutmeats after shelling. Shell thickness, kernel quality and type of pecan determines this percentage. If 100 pounds of pecans are cracked, about 40-58 pounds of nutmeats are produced and the other 42-60 pounds are shell and packing material. Approximately 8-12 ounces of nutmeats are used in making a pecan pie so this would mean about 15,000,000 pecan pies.
9. The parts of the nut are the kernel, shell and shuck. When the shuck begins to dry down and split, this signals that the pecans are ripe and ready to harvest.
10. Pecans are susceptible to becoming spoiled or rancid. When pecans are fresh and of good quality, they are bright golden color but when they are stale and rancid, they become dark brown. This spoilage happens because of the pecan’s high oil content. Pecans should be stored in the freezer until ready to use. At room temperature, pecans will keep for about 3 months. In the refrigerator, pecans will store for 6-9 months, and in deep freeze, pecans will store for many years with little decline in quality. The oils in the pecan will absorb other flavors or smells from other items so storage in airtight containers will help with the freshness.

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