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Pecans a Long Time Tradition in the South

Jeff Foxworthy is not the only nut native to the South. Pecans are one of the few food, fruit, or nut crops native to the south. Early Spanish explorers found Indians gathering and eating pecans, which are native to the Mississippi River Valley.

One of my earliest remembrances is picking up pecans on the farm. Since pecans fell in the fall and brought a healthy price of around a \$1 a pound it was an important source of Christmas money. Today pecans bring far less than a \$1 a pound and most farmers leave the pecan production to large acreage grove owners. Just like most other types of farming, pecan production has become highly mechanized on a large acreage basis.

However, pecans and pecan trees are still very important to homeowners. Pecan trees are one of the favorite shade trees in our area. In fact, large pecan trees can be immeasurable in the value added to property. When we see a house in the middle of a pecan orchard, we conjure up thoughts of the old south and plantations.

Pecans have been very important in our southern heritage; therefore, we are having the first ever "Pecan Festival" in downtown Florence. This inaugural event will take place on Cheves Street from 10:00 am until 6:00 p.m. on Saturday, November 6th. Some of the many contests planned for both young and old include: Pecan Bake Off, Pecan Pie-Eating, Pecan Shelling, Shag Dance, Family Look-A-Like, Cheerleading, and Sidewalk Art. After winning a contest you can enjoy numerous activities including: Pony Rides, Face Painting, Bands, Balloon Artists, Songs & Poetry, Jugglers, Magicians, and much more.

To learn the specifics on growing pecans we have both free and for-sale publications at our office in the back of the Public Services Building on the corner of Third Loop and Irby. You may also visit our Home & Garden Information Center through our web site at www.clemson.edu/florence. I may be contacted through our web site, amelton@clermson.edu, or 661-4800.

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