Plant Finder

Pecan

Carya illinoinensis

Height: 80 feet

Spread: 60 feet

Sunlight: ○ ◐

Hardiness Zone: 5a

Description:

The source of the tasty pecan, this is a massive tree that is primarily grown commercially for its delicious fruit or found in a native woodland setting, but can be used as a shade tree in large properties; somewhat difficult to transplant

Edible Qualities

Pecan is a large tree that is typically grown for its edible qualities. It produces brown nuts which are usually ready for picking from early to mid fall. The nuts have a sweet taste and a crunchy texture.

The nuts are most often used in the following ways:

- Fresh Eating
- Baking

Features & Attributes

Pecan has dark green deciduous foliage on a tree with an oval habit of growth. The large compound leaves turn an outstanding gold in the fall. It produces brown nuts in early fall. The fruit can be messy if allowed to drop on the lawn or walkways, and may require occasional clean-up. The shaggy dark brown bark adds an interesting dimension to the landscape.



Pecan fruit
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder



Pecan
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

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This is a deciduous tree with a shapely oval form. Its average texture blends into the landscape, but can be balanced by one or two finer or coarser trees or shrubs for an effective composition. This is a high maintenance plant that will require regular care and upkeep, and is best pruned in late winter once the threat of extreme cold has passed. It is a good choice for attracting squirrels to your yard. Gardeners should be aware of the following characteristic(s) that may warrant special consideration;

- Messy
- Insects
- Disease

Aside from its primary use as an edible, Pecan is sutiable for the following landscape applications;

- Shade
- Orchard/Edible Landscaping



Pecan flowers
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Planting & Growing

Pecan will grow to be about 80 feet tall at maturity, with a spread of 60 feet. It has a high canopy of foliage that sits well above the ground, and should not be planted underneath power lines. As it matures, the lower branches of this tree can be strategically removed to create a high enough canopy to support unobstructed human traffic underneath. It grows at a medium rate, and under ideal conditions can be expected to live to a ripe old age of 120 years or more; think of this as a heritage tree for future generations! While it is considered to be somewhat self-pollinating, it tends to set heavier quantities of fruit with a different variety of the same species growing nearby.

This tree is typically grown in a designated area of the yard because of its mature size and spread. It does best in full sun to partial shade. It is very adaptable to both dry and moist locations, and should do just fine under average home landscape conditions. It may require supplemental watering during periods of drought or extended heat. It is not particular as to soil pH, but grows best in rich soils. It is somewhat tolerant of urban pollution. This species is native to parts of North America.