

# Wild Pecan Tree *Carya illinoensis*

**Plant Type:** Native Nut Tree  
**Sun Exposure:** Sun, Part Sun  
**Season of Interest:** Summer, Fall  
**Bloom Time:** Spring  
**Bloom Color:** Yellow Catkins  
**Height:** 70 to 100 ft.  
**Width:** 40 to 75 ft.  
**Spacing:** 75 ft.  
**Water Needs:** Average  
**Maintenance:** Prune suckers  
**Soil Type:** Clay, Loam, Sandy  
**Soil pH:** Acidic, Neutral, Alkaline  
**Soil Drainage:** Well drained  
**Pests:** Pecan weevils  
**Diseases:** Leaf spot, Scab  
**Wildlife:** Birds, Bees, Butterflies, Small mammals



**Description:** Growing your own pecans is an attractive idea if you have plenty of space—not just for one tree but for two or even three because pecan trees require cross-pollination from other pecan trees to produce the best possible crop. The Pecan Tree is largest of the hickory species. They feature massive trunks and oval or rounded wide spreading crowns of branches that extend far down the trunk. They begin to bear nuts in 6–8 years, producing an average of 70–150 pounds of nuts per tree per year, and the crops of sweet nuts will continue abundantly for up to 300 years. They grow at a medium rate, with height increases of 12–24 inches per year. These trees are prized in the woodworking world for their beautiful grain. The nuts are favored by squirrels, deer, raccoons, foxes, wild turkeys, ducks, geese, crows, blue jays and many other animals.. For more information see: [plants.ces.ncsu.edu/plants/carya-illinoensis](http://plants.ces.ncsu.edu/plants/carya-illinoensis) .



**Care and Growing Tips:** Pecan trees need full sun with at least 6 to 8 hours of sunlight per day but can tolerate some shade until they are 50 to 60 years old. While pecan trees can grow in a wide range of soils, they produce best in sandy loam or clay soil. The soil should be fertile and well-drained yet still be able to hold water, otherwise the tree will need more frequent irrigation. Just as important as the right soil texture is that the roots have ample room to grow. The roots of pecan trees, which mostly grow in the topmost 6 to 18 inches of soil, spread twice as far as the branches.

Sufficient water is very important for pecan trees during the establishment of a young tree over the first three years. A tree of nut-bearing age rarely requires supplemental watering. The ideal climate for pecans is hot and humid. A factor that considerably limits the tree's geographical scope is that it needs warm nights. For each inch of trunk diameter, feed your pecan tree a complete fertilizer (such as 10-10-10) up to a maximum of 25 pounds per tree. In addition, in the spring around the time of bud break, apply one pound of ammonium nitrate per inch of trunk diameter, up to a maximum of eight pounds per tree. Zinc is also an important micro-nutrient for pecan trees, both for newly planted and established trees.