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PECAN IRRIGATION TO HARVEST ---

Growers should continue pecan irrigation on schedule into October, in the absence of adequate rains, in order to eliminate or reduce problems at harvest. Vivipary is a condition in which the pecan sprouts in the shuck while still on the tree, and it affects some varieties more than others. Good soil moisture until harvest reduces the extent of vivipary.

Stick tights or sticky shuck are caused by a number of factors, including moisture stress. While existing insect or disease damage cannot be corrected now, good soil moisture is necessary for the pecan shuck to properly dry and open.

LEAF ANALYSIS -----

Preferred leaf sampling time for nutrient analysis of both peaches and pecans is July, although later sampling is adequate if conducted at approximately the same time

year to year. However, early September is probably further than sampling time should be stretched in either crop. Moreover, any late summer fertilizer application to peaches should have been applied in August. Obviously, that late application should have been based upon the results of the earlier leaf analysis.

If you simply must sample at this time, pecan leaves should be collected halfway up the tree and on various sides; otherwise from as high as can be reached. Collect two leaflets from the middle of the leaf that is located at the mid-point of the current season's growth. A valid sample consists of 100 leaflets, which means 50 different sampling sites across the orchard.

For peaches, 50 fully-expanded leaves from the middle of the current season's growth and randomly taken across the orchard constitutes a valid sample.

While the guidelines are not more specific, sampling in other tree crops is generally limited to a single variety and to no more than 20 acres per sample. Naturally, different soil types and different management practices within the orchard require different samples.

Neither chlorotic, diseased nor damaged leaves should be collected, as the results of analysis of such leaves will not be representative of the true nutritional status of

the trees.

PEACH NUTRIENT DEFICIENCY SYMPTOMS -----

The most likely nutrient deficiencies that will be encountered in peaches in South Texas are nitrogen, potassium, iron and zinc. The visual symptoms are as follows:

Nitrogen—yellowish-green leaves at shoot tips to reddish-yellow at the base of shoots; often with red, brown and necrotic spots. Leaves may drop prematurely. Twigs will be spindly and short, with brownish-red to purplish-red bark.

Potassium—leaves are light green to pale yellow and may roll inward from the margins. Severe deficiency induces tip necrosis and crinkling of the midrib.

Iron—leaves exhibit classic interveinal chlorosis with green veins, although severe iron deficiency results in total leaf chlorosis.

Zinc—leaves become mottled chlorotic, with smaller, narrower and crinkled leaves. Severe deficiency causes shorter twigs with terminal rosetting.

Often, nutrient deficiencies occur together because of complex interactions between nutrients. Consequently, the specific symptoms for a given nutrient deficiency may be partly masked by the symptoms caused by other nutrient deficiencies, thereby making it nearly impossible to visually diagnose the exact nutrients which are deficient.

TEXAS PRODUCE CONVENTION -----

This umbrella meeting of Texas Citrus Mutual, Texas Vegetable Association, Texas Citrus and Vegetable Association, Texas Fruit Growers Association, Texas Apple

Growers Association and Texas Blueberry Growers Association is scheduled for September 20-23 in San Antonio. I have seen the general program and some of the concurrent sessions for the different associations and there's a lot packed into them. The trade show may well be the second largest in Texas horticulture.

OTHER NUTS -----

While the official pecan crop estimate is still a couple of weeks away, most observers expect the crop to be up somewhat from last season, despite the extended drought in Georgia and Hurricane Erin damage in southern Alabama.

Meanwhile, the price prospects for pecans should look even better since the California Agricultural Statistics Service forecast the 1995-96 California almond crop at 310 million pounds—down 58 percent from last year's 730 million pounds.

ORCHARD SHADE CLOTH -----

Many years ago, I had the opportunity to visit apple orchards in the state of Chihuahua in which shade cloth or netting on a pole-cable frame was employed over the tops of each row of trees for hail protection. Even then, I thought it a terribly expensive proposition.

Almost 25 years later, Washington apple growers are testing shade cloth over Fuji apples to improve fruit color, partly because bagging Fuji apples on the tree is very expensive and because evaporative cooling with irrigation creates other problems. Besides color enhancement, proponents of shading claim less sunburn loss, greater pesticide application efficacy (by reduced drift), cooler temperatures in the orchards and less wind scar damage, with potential hail and frost protection benefits.

Be that as it may, cost of such a system is running around \$6000 per acre, with about one-fourth of that in the supporting framework and three-fourths for the shade cloth. Figuring a 10-year useful life, that's about \$600 per acre annually. The added value of Fuji apples may be worth that, but I don't see much future for such systems in South Texas orchards.

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