

**FOR RELEASE WEEK OF FEBRUARY 24, 2016**

**TITLE: HERE'S HOW TO SELECT AND PLANT PECAN TREES**

**BY: RICKY ENSLEY, COUNTY EXTENSION COORDINATOR**

**POLK COUNTY EXTENSION, 20 N. MAIN STREET, CEDARTOWN**

**770-749-2142     uge2232@uga.edu**

Selecting pecan trees is very important when a homeowner is trying to decide what to put in the yard. The homeowner must consider how much management can be given to the tree and how much disease resistance the tree has. Therefore, the three varieties that are recommended for homeowners are Elliott, Curtis, and Stuart.

The homeowner should select trees from a reputable nursery, and be sure the tree is alive. This is important because many times package trees are allowed to dry out or suffer cold damage. Scrape the bark slightly and if green appears, the tree is healthy and alive.

Before planting, make sure they are protected from freezing and have adequate moisture. The homeowner may want to put them in the garage and keep them moist until ready to plant.

1. The January-February period is normally the preferred time to plant pecan trees.
2. The homeowner should select a good site that is well drained and away from power lines and buildings. It should be at least 60 feet away from the other trees and structures.
3. Dig a hole at least 24 inches wide at the top and from two to four feet deep. It is a good idea to soak the root system prior to planting.
4. Examine the root system and prune off all broken or injured roots. At times it is necessary to trim the tap root and side root to make it fit the hole. Never twist the roots in the hole, because it will injure the root system.
5. Plant the tree at the same depth that it grew in the nursery. Fill the hole about 1/3 to 1/2 full of top soil and water to settle the soil and eliminate air pockets. Repeat the process, adding topsoil until the tree is planted at the same depth that it grew in the nursery.

6. Construct a ring of soil around the tree about three to four feet in diameter and six to eight inches deep. This provides a basin for holding water during the first two seasons.
7. As soon as the tree is planted, remove  $\frac{1}{3}$  to  $\frac{1}{2}$  of the top. Make this cut just above a healthy bud.
8. The tree should be watered at least once a week during the growing season the first two years it is planted. At least 10 gallons of water are needed each week unless a one inch rain is received.
9. Normally a soil test is taken and the tree is fertilized according to soil test.
10. Using good mulch around the tree will help conserve moisture and also keep weeds down.