



AUSTRALIAN  
PECAN GROWERS  
ASSOCIATION INC.

**Summer newsletter 2016-17**



## A note from the editor...

Greetings and welcome to 2017! I hope you enjoyed a refreshing Christmas break and are ready for the year ahead as we enter into the business end of the growing season. It's hot hot hot in Moree which is fantastic news for our pecans, everything is now escalating in size after a slow start to the season from the mild spring. Size is an important selling point, but it is very important to ensure the trees can then fill large nuts with kernel. We are closely monitoring the nutrition status of our trees during January, particularly as we are anticipating a larger crop, to maximise the quality of the kernel and therefore positively impact the crop value.

It was pointed out to me that I neglected to publish the winner of the best pecans for 2016. Congratulations to our champion and president Scott Clark who took out the top spot with 'Cape Fear' as pictured below. I've also listed our runners up from this competition unique to our industry.

- 1<sup>st</sup>: Scott & Karen Clark with 'Cape Fear'  
2<sup>nd</sup>: Geoff & Debbie Bugden with 'Desirable'  
3<sup>rd</sup>: Owen & Julie Trevor-Jones with 'Kiowa'



I also recently changed my last name having tied the knot back in November, so don't delete the emails that come with the new name attached once I get it sorted!

Eryn Lehman  
APGA Secretary

### In this issue...

- Varieties that work well in the northern rivers
- Summary on leaf sampling
- Meet Dave and Stacy Otto de Grancy
- Update on the pecan market
- Field day notification
- Delicious pecan recipes to try



## In the news

### **‘Pecan’ spells trouble. You don’t know the half of it.**

2<sup>nd</sup> January 2017

There are at least four different ways to say “pecan”; PEE-can and puh-KAHN are the most famous versions but for some people have different uses. Apparently the pronunciation changes depending on whether you are referring to the nut or a type of dessert, for example, “its PEE-can pie but praline puh-KAHN ice cream.” An interesting and light hearted read.

Read more: <http://www.ajc.com/lifestyles/food--cooking/pecan-spells-trouble-you-don-know-the-half/i1Zh75f6MHgVa4PoATJt0J/>

## Jokes

Angela Merkel arrives at passport control in Athens airport. “Nationality?” asks the immigration officer. “German” she replies. Occupation? “No, just here for a few days.

What’s red and smells like blue paint? Red paint.

### **Upcoming field days:**

4<sup>th</sup> February 2017 Sawtell RSL near Coffs Harbour, NSW.  
Feedback from members on the objectives of the APGA

18<sup>th</sup> March in Lismore, NSW  
Visit the NSW DPI’s variety trial now in its 3<sup>rd</sup> leaf



## Down on the farm

*Geoff Bugden, Wilson River Pecans*

Wow, has it been hot or what! Here on the North Coast we are very used to dry and windy Spring's but the last few months have been ridiculous. Things started off great in August with 263mm of good rain. I thought we were going to have a similar Spring to 2015 which provided really good rainfall but no so. September gave only 43mm, October only 9mm, November 82mm and December 64mm. This along with day after day of temperatures between 30 and 40°C made things going very tough down on the farm.

At the time of writing this article we have had a total of 198mm in Sept, Oct, Nov and Dec combined and 152mm in the first 7 days of January. I suppose, really, that is not too far off our historically normal. January brings the start of the wet season for the North Coast. Luckily, Deb and I decided to start updating our irrigation and, as you can see by the photo to the right, we have installed a 150mm water main right through the middle of our farm. This will assist in getting sufficient water to the outer reaches of the farm. We have been irrigating like made to get the required two inches per week per acre onto the ground.



That bloke helping me put the pipe in across a drain in our son William. A lot of the members of our Association will remember

Will. He loved going to the field days and having a look around all the farms we have been too over the years. Will is quite a good footballer and was contracted to the Parramatta Eels for a few years and has played in the Queensland Cup for the last 2 seasons, for the Tweed Heads Seagulls. Will had a great 2 years with the club winning the "Best and Fairest" players award for 2 years in a row. He has been rewarded with a train and trial contract with the North Queensland Cowboys and is going great. Will has his first trial on the 11<sup>th</sup> of February in Mackay against the Eastern Suburbs Roosters. It depends on how he goes in this trial whether he can secure a full time position at the Cowboys or not. If he doesn't make it he is contracted to the Cairns football club who are a feeder club to the Cowboys. Will is 6 foot 4 inches tall and weighs 110kg and unlike his father, Will does not have a scrap of fat on him.

Keep your fingers crossed and I will keep you updated on his progress.

I have had several phone calls recently about varieties. What to plant, what variety produces early or late and what pollinates what.

This is a hard question to answer and is a big call when deciding what varieties to go with for your orchard. Think long and hard before making this decision because it could be up to 15 years before

Just between you and me. Whilst Will has been home for the past 2 years our weekly food bill went up by \$200-00. Yes that's right, Will eats \$200-00 of food per week. That is \$10,000-00 per year. That = \$20,000-00 in the last 2 years. At \$25-00 per tonne delivered, that is another 800 tonnes of Chicken litter I could have put on the farm. Don't tell his mother I said that. She just doesn't understand the value of chicken manure.





you know if your decision was right or wrong. All I can say to the people who have asked me this question is what I have got and what I have done on our farm. I am a big fan of the two varieties, Shoshoni and Cape Fear. Yes they have their problems and yes some pecan nut farmer's hate Shoshoni but I don't. On this farm, Shoshoni is our money tree. It produces more nuts than any other variety we have on this farm and in some cases up to 5 times more. Old Geoff Café, the bloke we purchased this farm from said to me, "I wouldn't own a pecan nut farm that didn't have Shoshoni on it". For the assistance of our North Coast pecan nut farmers, I have included two pollination surveys done on this farm. One in 2000 and one in 2015 (see end of the article for 2015). You will see they are both very similar. Where I would definitely plant Shoshoni, I definitely would not plant Apache. Although they are a good pollinator, at age 30 years they shed 80% of their nuts every year. That is what happens on this farm and having said that it may be very different 50k away.

We are coming into an 'on year' at our farm but it doesn't look like a big on year. Most of the trees have a good crop of nuts on them. What is odd is, we haven't had much of a December nut drop. The trees throw nuts during December that were not pollinated properly during October, November. I wonder if the Boron spray may have helped.

As we dug the trench for the 150mm irrigation main we went close to the trunk of several trees. You can see the mass of roots down to about the first 300mm then they tend to thin out quite a bit. It is said the lateral roots of a pecan nut tree will go out as far as the tree is high. The diameter of the roots in this photo would indicate this to be true.



**Have I told you about my mate Gilbert.** Gilbert is a cow famer. He has his home farm of about 150 acres and leases about 10 other farms around the North Coast so he is kept busy checking his farms, buying and selling cattle. Let me describe Gilbert for you. He looks just like Shaggy out of the movie "Scooby Doo" or Gilligan off "Gilligan's Island" and really you would think it was the same person. Gilbert is always getting into trouble. One evening a few months ago, Gilbert decided he was going to burn off a patch of Blady grass down in a low lying part of his home farm. He lit the blady grass up just on dusk, just as a low lying fog started to come in. Well the smoke mixed in with the fog and created a thick blanket that you could not see through, about waist height. Gilbert got down on his hands and knees and crawled around looking for his ute but could not find it and then it got dark. About 9pm that night, Gilbert's wife Terri was starting to get a bit concerned as Gilbert hadn't come home for dinner, so she started ringing around some of his mates to see if he was there having a few beers or fixing some piece of farm machinery but Gilbert was nowhere to be found. Terri thought, 'Oh well he'll turn up' and went to bed.



Gilbert crawled around that paddock all night but couldn't find his ute. He managed to crawl to the boundary fence and followed it for about 2km across one creek and 2 drains but it was daylight before he got home. Terri was up and getting breakfast for the kids, and it appears this was just another adventure for old Gilbert.

## DID YOU KNOW?

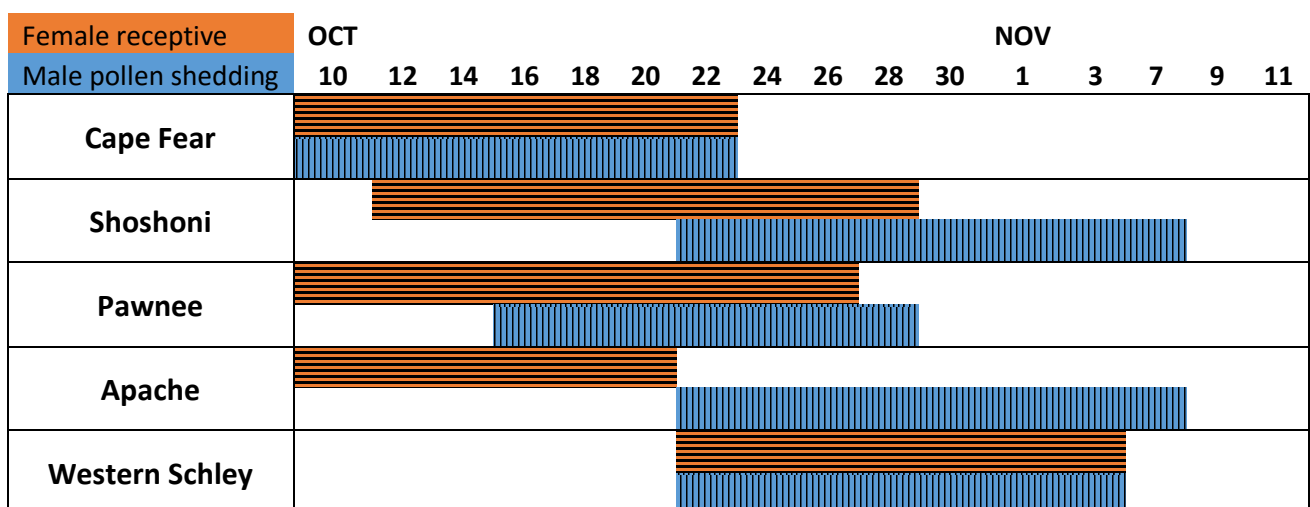
I read an article in the 'Pecan South' magazine by Lenny Wells titled "How does the hot dry weather affect crop" (July 2011). The article is quite lengthy so I will paraphrase;

*"The greatest demand for water in a pecan tree comes during the kernel-filling stage about (February to March). There is some demand during the nut sizing period but it's not as great as it will be later on. If you overwater during the nut sizing period, it will be that much harder to fill those nuts in February - March, particularly if the dry weather holds up through the end of the growing season. Therefore, do not deviate from your normal irrigation schedule".*



*"The dry early summer bodes well for next year's crop. Darrell Sparks developed a climatic model several years ago to predict pecan production. Previous years rain for Nov – Jan was the most important climatic factor influencing pecan production and had an effect 6.5 times greater than current years rain in Oct – Feb. Basically the less rain you have from Nov – Jan in one year, the better the production the following year."*

## 2015 flowering: (2000 survey available on request)





## Preparation for leaf sampling

Eryn Lehman, Stahmann Farms Enterprises

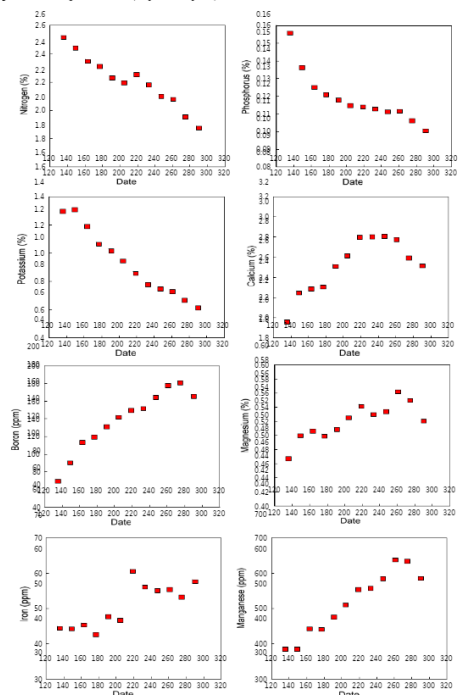
Leaf sampling is one of the most important tools a grower has to check an orchard's fertility status. As pecan trees will not always show deficiency or toxicity symptoms, particularly as they mature, imbalances may already be affecting yield before symptoms even appear, possibly for years. If it was slow to appear then correction may be just as slow, particularly when you consider the size of mature pecan trees, so leaf samples are also important in creating and monitoring a nutrition program.



Many procedures for leaf sampling are available online, but considering the weakest point of a leaf sample is generally the person collecting a sample it is worth summarising here. When walking through a field, we who spend lots of time looking at pecan trees can often notice subtle differences in the trees due to variation in irrigation runs, soil types, nutrition distribution, etc. It is therefore important to ensure your leaf sample captures this variation, so leaves should be collected from trees throughout the field. Walk in a zig-zag pattern taking the middle leaflets from the youngest mature compound leaf or the leaf closest to a cluster of nuts, and collect from all faces of the tree to account for differences in sunlight exposure. If there are large differences in the orchard, like soil type, location, nutrition or irrigation practices, these sites should be sampled separately to maintain accuracy in the results.

Place the leaves in a paper bag and store in cool conditions, such as an eski or refrigerator, until you are ready to prepare and send the samples. Laboratories often will provide instructions for how many leaflets to collect and how samples should be handled, so contact your preferred outlet for

Figure 1. Pecan leaf tissue nutrient concentration changes during the growing season. Dates are presented as Julian Date (day of the year).



Western Nutrient Management Conference, 2005, Vol. 6, Salt Lake City, UT.

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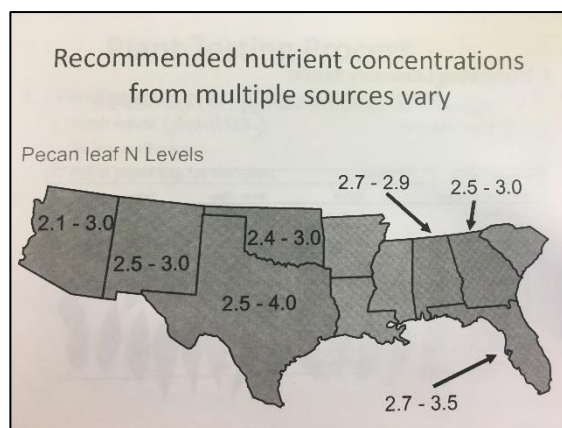
specific instructions. As an example, I collect at least 30 leaflets per field and briefly rinse them in demineralised water to remove excess dust and foliar spray contaminants, then mail them on the same day to ensure they reach the lab on the following day. It would be preferable to drop them straight off at the lab and minimise the chance of nutrient changes before analysis, but the 3 hour drive is a little too far for us!

Timing of collection is also quite important. Most standards for assessing pecan leaf samples are developed based on late January to early February sampling date, which is why standard only apply to samples collected during this period. Changes in leaf nutrition mean that samples taken outside this window cannot be accurately interpreted according to these samples (see chart on the left), as nutrients will either be higher or lower than what is acceptable even though the tree may be operating in the



optimal range. However, comparative samples can be taken between healthy and unhealthy sites to diagnose any suspected imbalances.

Standards also vary with location; due to differences in soil type, management practices and location. To the right is an example of the optimal nitrogen levels for pecans grown in the southern USA (taken from the slideshow presented at the 2016 Western Production Short Course mineral nutrition lecture), showing a range of differences in recommendations for the same crop! Therefore, it is important to remember when interpreting your results that these standards are only a guide and should always be viewed as part of an integrated monitoring plan alongside soil tests, quality reports at harvest, consultants, and walking through the orchard a lot.



The table below shows some of the standards that have been developed for pecan leaf. Note again the variation between the three standards for each element, reinforcing the variation. However, all three have proven to be relevant for interpreting our leaf analyses so I can recommend them as appropriate standards for Australia.

Element	Units	Stein & Storey Acceptable Range	Robinson et al. Standards	Walworth Yield Correlation Results
Nitrogen	%	2.5 - 4.0	2.5 - 3.0	2.05 - 2.96
Phosphorous	%	0.12 - 0.3	0.12 - 0.3	0.10 - 0.16
Potassium	%	0.75 - 1.25	0.75 - 1.5	1.00 - 1.59
Calcium	%	0.7 - 1.5	0.7 - 2.5	1.57 - 2.43
Magnesium	%	0.3 - 0.6	0.3 - 0.7	0.39 - 0.59
Sulphur	%		0.15 - 0.25	0.14 - 0.20
Sodium	%		<0.1	
Chloride	%		<0.5	
Zinc	mg/kg	80 - 500	50 - 100	86 - 257
Manganese	mg/kg	40 - 300	150 - 500	104 - 674
Copper	mg/kg	10 - 30	5 - 50	6 - 10
Iron	mg/kg	100 - 300	50 - 300	43 - 81
Boron	mg/kg	20 - 45	20 - 50	74 - 147
Nickel	mg/kg			8.5 - 14.3

Further reading:

[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/240626707\\_PECAN\\_LEAF\\_NUTRITION\\_STATUS](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/240626707_PECAN_LEAF_NUTRITION_STATUS)  
<http://aces.nmsu.edu/ces/pecans/soils-and-fertilization.html>





## Grower Profile

### Basic information

Dave and Stacy Otto de Grancy, Southern Sky Pecans.

Only 9 acres in Monash, South Australia (desert) – pecan orchard & processing and packaging facilities

### Describe your pecan orchard:

We have several different varieties as an experiment to see what performs best in the Riverland. We have mainly Western Schley and Wichita, but also have Desirable, Shoshoni, Cape Fear, Navaho and Apache. Total planting (a tiny) 355 trees. Two hundred fifty five (255) trees were potted and 100 bare rooted, which we will never do again. We have had terrible results and lost 3 years on the last 100 trees.

Our property is based on a sand hill with red sand depth of up to 3 metres in places, and we have an annual rain fall of less than 250 mm, and it can achieve high 40's in summer. We can get frosts and it is not uncommon to get minus 6 degrees Celsius in winter.

We are trying to go down the path of biological farming practices, but are struggling to get our organic matter built up in our sand. We have one experimental patch that has a Lucerne crop that we slash down and do not bale and we are getting excellent results with organic matter, but we are afraid the Lucerne will compete for too much water. We have snail clover and cereal growing in the other patches. Our trees are looking very healthy and love our climate.



### Expectations for the 2016-17 season:

We were looking at a larger crop again this year as our older trees are on their 11<sup>th</sup> growing season and crop is expanding at a rapid rate. But sadly on 11/11/16 we had one of our worst storms in many years causing 100 million dollars damage to our local area crops. We have had our crop reduced by a good 50% as it has knocked nearly all of our flowers off and we can't see too many nuts that have set, so we need to wait and re-evaluate in a month or so. First crop in 2014 was 430kg, 2015 1,580kgs, and we were expecting up to 3 tonne this year but won't get anywhere near that now. We have employed the help of geese and mini sheep to help us keep the weeds down this year.



## Challenges

Our challenges are that we are so isolated to the rest of the pecan industry so we feel we are flying blind most of the time. It would be lovely to pop over to the neighbours place for a beer and do a crop inspection and comparison, but as we are the only growers in SA (that we know of) it is impossible to do that. Irrigation is also another issue here in SA as we can have our irrigation rights reduced heavily in a dry season, so we have to spend a lot of money to lease in water.

Stacy and I also process our own pecans and find it very challenging to create a market in SA, as a lot of people are not aware of the uses of pecans and how good they taste. Because of this we have given away a heck of a lot just to educate people and hope they come back to buy some. We also have entry level gear and it would be great to go to another processor and have a look at how they do it, as we are watching a lot of YouTube to try to get the most out of our equipment. If anyone has a better way to sort pecans after they come out of the sheller please let us know, as that is our slowest part of processing.

## What are the plans for the future?

Crikey, the future is massive I think! We have plans to expand our plantings and amount we process. We also hope to get a few growers up and running in the Riverland and be able to purchase and process their pecans under our label. We also plan on purchasing more equipment to spray our trees, a real tractor with forks and more processing equipment. We really need another cracker to help speed things up in the shed a bit too.

We would like to see our pecans in a lot more stores throughout SA - that is our real dream. We have a themed 1800's store in our pecan shed which we plan to sell our pecans from and there has been a fair bit of interest in holding functions in our shed (we already have 2 booked). This is one thing that we had never planned on doing but it's another way to introduce people to Southern Sky Pecans and hopefully another form of income.





## Pecan Market Update

*Richard Sampson Genest, Stahmann Farms Enterprises*

The 2016-17 North American pecan harvest can be characterised as a tale of three regions. In Mexico the crop was larger than expected but of mixed quality with the best of it heavily targeted by Chinese inshell buyers, who also purchased a large proportion of the Eastern US crop, which was again lighter than earlier forecast. A long, mild autumn in the Western United States delayed the start of harvest there leaving the market starved of kernel into the Christmas period.

Steady US consumption and growing demand for kernel in global markets, combined with a rebound in Chinese interest in 2016 has resulted in a shortage of stocks at the end of 2016. As the Western US crop rolls in we expect to see the situation normalise and prices ease from their recent spike, and with walnuts trading at less than half the current pecan price we will watch closely for signs of switching which may undermine pecan consumption on 2017. Nonetheless, we expect to see pecan prices remain relatively firm through the first half of the year at least.

Inshell prices continue to rise dramatically with shellers offering as much as USD5.60 per point inshell, which equates to around USD7.10 per pound kernel price. The spot kernel market is trailing slightly at around \$6.90/lb for halves and \$6.75/lb for pieces, indicating a squeeze on processor margins, but this is a big jump from the general 2016 range of \$6.00-\$6.50.

So what's causing the frenzy? The US crop, at one point estimated as high as 330 million pounds, has been downgraded to 267 million pounds forecast, and whilst Mexico produced a big crop it was of generally poor quality. Into that environment the Chinese came raiding bigtime, buying vast swathes of the best Mexican Wichita and the majority of the Georgian crop, as well as western varieties out of Texas and New Mexico. At the same time, the US shelling sector is witnessing a battle of the titans as Golden PTN and National Pecan wrestle for market share supremacy.

So the outlook from here? The Chinese buying season is now over but domestic inshell procurement will continue until the end of January. When there is no more crop left to buy the industry will turn its attention to the kernel market and there will be keen interest in the impact of these prices on consumer demand. Domestic US consumption will almost certainly pull back in 2017, but to what extent this creates a surplus in this short market remains to be seen.

In Australia, we have seen signs of growth in pecan consumption through 2016 which, if sustained, will positively impact the local industry.



In recognition that APGA members sell through other channels, this edition also includes a market update from growers David & Kaye McNaught who sell their pecans into local businesses and farmers markets.

**Tweed River Pecans offers Nut in shell, kernel halves and kernel pieces.**

*David & Kaye McNaught, Tweed River Pecans*

We crack out pecans using a Thompson sheller, and contract out the cleaning and sorting. We find that the Shoshoni and Cheyenne varieties are the easiest to crack out, but Wichita and Desirable do not crack out cleanly.

We package into ziplock foil bags, heat sealed, for sale at the local Farmers Market every week and also supply packs to local Fruit Shops and coffee shops. We have been selling locally in the Tweed Shire for 6 years. In 2016-17, about 3 tonnes of pecans is sold in this fashion over the 12 month period, usually for \$25/kg. Kernel is stored in refrigerators, and we try not to carry stock over. It is always difficult to estimate how much of our harvested nut to keep and sell in this way, as the majority of our nut crop is dried and sent in bulk to a local wholesaler for export.

The major selling points are the freshness, low food miles, personal relationships with the growers and the knowledge that they are chemical free. We hold Farm Field days each year to invite locals to visit us.

There are some sales through email and phone orders and these are mailed to our regular buyers, but we do not have a website or on-line presence.





## Field day notification

Date: 4<sup>th</sup> February 2017

Time: 11:00 am

Location: Sawtell RSL, 38-40 First Ave Sawtell NSW 2452

The Australian Pecan Growers Association (APGA) is currently reviewing the direction and objectives of the association to better reflect the changes in membership over the past few years. The pecan industry is expanding as new and existing growers plant more trees, so there is a need to revise the original constitution that was written over 20 years ago. The executive met in October 2016 and listed some objectives they felt were feasible for the association and relevant to the industry.

### **Proposed mission statement key words:**

Growing the industry, sustainability, leadership

### **Proposed objectives:**

1. Distribute information about growing pecans in Australia
  - a. Growers' handbook
  - b. Case studies
  - c. Presentations at AGM
  - d. Field days
  - e. Access to resources to supplement our publications (e.g. texas pecan growers' handbook)
2. Food safety in orchards
  - a. Consumer health – reinforce the importance of maintaining high standards
  - b. Handling of product post-harvest
  - c. Orchard management pre harvest, harvest
3. Foster goodwill in the association
  - a. Code of conduct
  - b. Proactive in improvements
4. Liaison with external parties
  - a. Government
  - b. Researchers

We are now seeking feedback from members to ensure our objectives are relevant to you, in a meeting held in Sawtell (near Coffs Harbour). For members unable to attend, feedback is still welcome and can be emailed through to either Scott or Eryn before the RSVP date.

Please RSVP to Scott or Eryn by 27<sup>th</sup> January 2017.



## Recipe ideas

### Summer Leaf Salad

Combining figs and pecans, this is perfect for summer entertaining on the warm nights. Serves 12.

#### Ingredients

- 160g (1 ¼ cups) pecan halves
- 3 x 120g bags mixed salad leaves
- 6 ripe figs, quartered
- 2 tbs sunflower oil
- 3 tsp raspberry vinegar
- 2 tsp wholegrain mustard
- 2 tsp honey
- Salt & freshly ground

#### *Raspberry dressing*

- 80ml (1/3 cup) extra virgin olive oil

#### Method

Preheat oven to 200°C. Spread the pecans over the base of a roasting pan. Roast in oven for 6-10 minutes or until lightly browned. Set aside to cool.

To make the dressing, place the olive oil, sunflower oil, vinegar, mustard and honey in a screw-top jar and shake to combine. Season with salt and pepper.

Place the salad leaves in a serving bowl. Top with pecans and figs. Drizzle with dressing and serve immediately.

### Chocolate Cinnamon Pecan Smoothie

As posted on facebook by Pally Pecans on 29<sup>th</sup> November 2016. See their post for video instructions.

#### Ingredients

- 1 cup coconut (or almond) milk
- ¼ cup rough chopped pecans
- 2 – 3 dates, pitted
- 1 large banana
- ½ teaspoon cinnamon
- 2 tablespoons cacao nibs
- 2 cups ice

#### Method

Put everything in the blender and blend until smooth. Add additional milk and/or ice depending on how thick you like your smoothie.

Top with additional pecans, cacao nibs or toasted coconut flakes to taste.





## 2016-17 APGA Committee

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Our facebook group is now public and active! Search “Australian Pecan Growers Association” and become a member to share pecan growing tips, pictures and recipes. Let’s get the word out about Australian pecans.

Our logo has also been updated as we continue to refresh the face of the APGA. Let us know what you think!



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