

*Carya illinoensis*

[Synonyms : *Carya diguetii*, *Carya illinoensis*, *Carya olivaeformis*, *Carya oliviformis*, *Carya pecan*, *Carya tetraptera*, *Hicoria oliviformis*, *Hicoria pecan*, *Hicorius pecan*, *Juglans illinoensis*, *Juglans olivaeformis*, *Juglans oliviformis*, *Juglans pecan*]

**PECAN** is a deciduous tree. Native to the southern United States it has greenish catkins and leaves which turn yellow in Autumn.

It is also known as *Amerikansk valnød* (Danish), *Bao ke shan he tao* (Chinese), *Cária* (Portuguese), *Hickory*, *Hickorybaum* (German), *Hickorynussbaum* (German), *Illinois hickory*, *Illinois nut*, *Mei guo shan he tao* (Chinese), *Mississippi nuts*, *Noix de pacanier* (French), *Noix de pécan* (French), *Noix pacane* (French), *Noce di pecan* (Italian), *Nogal americano* (Spanish), *Nogueira-peca* (Portuguese), *Oionn nut* (American Indian), *Pacanier* (French), *Pecán* (Spanish), *Pecana* (Spanish), *Pecanero* (Spanish), *Pecannød* (Danish), *Pecannød* (Spanish), *Pecannød* (Danish), *Pecannød* (Danish), *Pecannoot* (Dutch), *Pecan nut*, *Pecantræ* (Danish), *Peekannattsu* (Japanese), *Pekaanihäkinä* (Finnish), *Pekaanihäkinäpuu* (Finnish), *Peknarbo* (Esperanto), *Pekankarjo* (Esperanto), *Pekannoot* (Dutch), *Pekannöt* (Swedish), *Pekan-nuss* (German), *Pekannussbaum* (German), *Pekanträd* (Swedish), *Pican-nut*, *Quả hồ đào* (Vietnamese), and Sweet pecan.

*Illinoensis* means ‘of or from Illinois (United States)’.

The name Pecan is derived from similar names for it in some of the languages of many of the North American Indian tribes in the tree’s native habitat.

Pecan is familiar to local North American Indian tribes not just as a source of food (roasted for emergency rations on hunting trips, as ground meal for thickening, as oil pressed from the nuts for a walnut-like (*Juglans*) flavouring in cooked fruit, or as the oily nuts themselves in vegetable dishes) but also as a medicine. The Comanche tribe are particularly singled out in records as having eaten the fruit – and they also stored the nuts for Winter use. In addition the Comanches used the leaves as a remedy for ringworm, and the Kiowa Indians prescribed a bark decoction in treatments for tuberculosis. Further south, in Mexico, local Indians have also used it to treat indigestion and intermittent fever.

Some pecan trees were introduced from the Mississippi valley to Monticello, the Virginian estate of the future 3<sup>rd</sup> President of the United States, Thomas Jefferson (1743-1826). In 1775 he passed a few of these to his friend George Washington (1732-1799) who planted them at Mount Vernon on 25<sup>th</sup> March, days before he took up his official duties as Commander-in-Chief of the colonial army in the American War of Independence. They are still there. Although orchards of these huge trees are a familiar sight in the South today, it is the State of Georgia that dominates in commercial production.

Pecan was adopted as a state emblem for Texas in the United States in 1947.

The nuts are usually used for making confectionery and puddings nowadays – and are perhaps most commonly identified with a dish particularly associated with Americans, pecan pie. The hard and tough, brown wood has been used occasionally to make agricultural implements. Today the seed oil is used commercially by the cosmetics industry. The pecan (nut) is used as an ingredient by the food industry eg. in bread, cakes, confectionery, ice-cream and vegetarian food.

