

Many people are under the impression that winter is a time of rest for pecan farmers.....the reality is that it just may be our busiest time of the year!

It is now late March, and our pecan trees have not yet started to put out their new leaves, a process we call 'bud break'. The pecan tree will start to flower and put out it's pollen producing catkins very soon after bud break. The actual pecan nuts start to form in late April, and they will be growing and developing on the tree for close to six months.

The pecan trees in Crystal City have grown to a point where their size is interfering with the growth of surrounding trees. The Crystal City orchard sits on the bank of the Nueces River, and the soil is an optimal alluvial river soil. With proper watering, these trees are capable of living for 200 years, and attaining a height of 100 feet. We have had to designate about half of our trees as permanent trees, and the rest of the trees are 'temporary', although temporary may turn out to be 20 years. Our men have been hard at work extensively pruning back the temporary trees, and this will allow the permanent trees to continue to grow and produce lots of nuts. Note the heavy crop of clover growing under the trees; this will help put lots of nitrogen into the soil.

At Rio Grande Organics, we embrace our responsibility to future generations. This winter, we completed the planting of 40 acres of new pecan trees. We will be old men by the time that these trees are productive and full grown, but our children will be able to enjoy the nuts that are produced. Many people talk about making the world a better place - we are busy planting trees!

Our Quemado foreman, Alan Frerich, and our whole Quemado crew did a great job planting these new trees. These young trees will depend on water from the Rio Grande River for their survival. Agriculture in the US has been under relentless pressure from developers and environmentalists, who claim that our efforts are 'wasting water'. We like to think that watering suburban lawns and building endless car-washes is a much greater misuse of our precious resources.

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