

# Pecans

## Background

Pecan trees are native to North America, growing in woodlands in the Mississippi Valley from Indiana and Illinois to Kansas and Texas, and at higher altitudes south to central Mexico. Not surprisingly pecans are known as the American nut and are pronounced 'p'khan' in their home country. However, they are usually pronounced 'peekan' in Australia. Commercial plantations of pecans extend beyond their native range into New Mexico, Arizona, Alabama, Georgia, Florida and North and South Carolina. Pecans are also grown commercially in Australia, Brazil, China, Israel and South Africa.

The first commercial pecan plantation in Australia was established by Deane Stahmann in 1963 near Gatton in Queensland. Stahmann Farm's larger plantation, 'Trawalla', near Moree in New South Wales, was established in 1971. 'Trawalla' has achieved some of the highest yields in the world and accounts for approximately 90% of Australian production. Stahmann Farms has led the way for the Australian pecan industry and their processing plant at Toowoomba provides processing and marketing facilities for the whole industry.

Pecan plantings in Australia are expanding by about 10% per year. In addition to Stahmann Farm's pecan plantation at Moree in New South Wales, orchards extend from the Hunter Valley and Nelsons Bay north of Sydney to the mid north coast near Kempsey, and the north coast of New South Wales. In Queensland pecan orchards are located at Munduberra, Gympie, Atherton Tablelands and Beaudesert. Pecan growers total approximately 100 and plantings exceed 180 000 trees covering 1500 hectares. An orchard planting of 20 hectares has been suggested as a minimum to ensure long-term viability. The Australian Pecan Growers Association Inc. is an active industry group formed to represent and support growers and improve pecan production through educational and research activities.