



Texas Connection

Activity #66

Germinating Giants

Teaching students how to think, not what to think, about the environment.

Texas adopted the pecan tree as its state tree in 1919. Thus, adding pecan tree facts to this activity is a great way to teach students about their state tree.

If possible, bring in pecans and pecan leaves so the students can practice measurement skills. They also can compare the weight of the pecan in and out of the shell.

Pecan Fun Facts:

1. James Hogg, Texas governor from 1891 to 1895, liked pecans so much he asked that a pecan tree be planted by his grave.
2. The pecan tree belongs to the hickory family.
3. The word "pecan" comes from "paccan" an Algonquin Native American word which means "a tough nut to crack."
4. Pecan trees can live to be over 100 years old.
5. A tree will not start producing nuts until its 6 to 8-years old.
6. The best pecans have "meat" inside their shell that make up half of their weight. Some pecans are bred to produce more meat than others, making a bigger edible part of the pecan.
7. Pecans went to the moon with the Apollo astronauts because of their high nutritional value. They still are eaten in space today.
8. The pecan tree may be the state tree of Texas, but Albany, Georgia, calls itself the pecan capitol of the United States.
9. Okmulgee, Oklahoma boasts the largest pecan pie ever cooked.
10. There are over 1,000 types of pecan trees with nuts ranging in size from small to mammoth.
11. Pecan trees like to grow in rich, fertile bottomlands found in East and Central Texas and the Concho River valley. They're now landscape and orchard trees.

Links

Native Trees of Texas
<http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/ornamentals/natives/CARYAILLINOINENSIS.HTM>

Trees of Texas
<http://texastreeid.tamu.edu/>

Germinating Giants continued

12. Pecan trees are thought to have originated in southern Illinois. As years passed, flooding from rivers spread the pecans across the country. They now can be found in states along the Gulf of Mexico, as well as Oklahoma, Missouri, Arkansas, Kansas, South Carolina, New Mexico, and Arizona. These are the top producing pecan states.
13. A large tree will usually be about 120 feet tall.
14. Trunks in old trees can reach up to four feet in diameter.
15. The seed, or nut, can be one to two inches long and one inch wide.
16. The tree sprouts compound leaves that are 12 to 20 inches long and made up of 11 to 17 leaflets.
17. Each leaflet is four to eight inches long.
18. The width of pecan leaf is two inches.
19. A pecan weighs about 3.75 to 5.75 grams.

