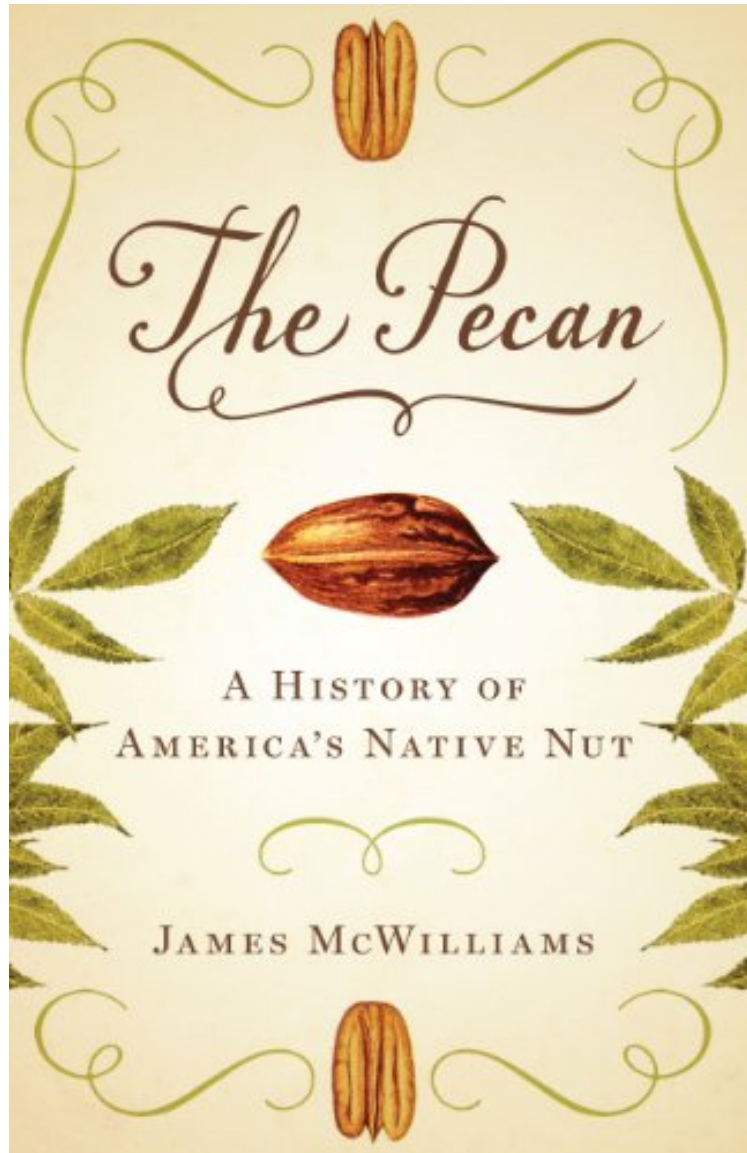


[Free pdf] The Pecan: A History of America's Native Nut

The Pecan: A History of America's Native Nut

James McWilliams

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James McWilliams : The Pecan: A History of America's Native Nut before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Pecan: A History of America's Native Nut:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. first about the pecan, then the pecan industry, then the threats itBy science readerI found the first three chapters, which are about the native pecan and how it was used by aboriginal people and early settlers from elsewhere, quite informative and interesting. I was less interested in the chapters that document the rise of the pecan industry and its globalization. The final chapter, The Future of the Pecan, is gut wrenching, laying out the threats that "hellip;may mean that the pecan's only future home will indeed be in a seed

bank." Knowledge of what the author calls the growers' "heavily chemical-driven approach to disease and insect control" will make me greet the gift of five pounds of pecans that show up under my Christmas tree each year less joyfully than in the past, more sorrowfully. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. This Nut of a Book is Hard to Crack! By Nellie L. Garone This book reads like a doctorate thesis. It is filled with loads of information and seems to take forever to get to the point. The first three chapters are interesting, but then the book veers off course with his exploration of the globalization of the industry. I would not buy this product again. No illustrations, no graphics-- print is small. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Good reading! By Edward D. Miller Very interesting

What would Thanksgiving be without pecan pie? New Orleans without pecan pralines? Southern cooks would have to hang up their aprons without America's native nut, whose popularity has spread far beyond the tree's natural home. But as familiar as the pecan is, most people don't know the fascinating story of how native pecan trees fed Americans for thousands of years until the nut was "improved"; a little more than a century ago—and why that rapid domestication actually threatens the pecan's long-term future. In *The Pecan*, acclaimed writer and historian James McWilliams explores the history of America's most important commercial nut. He describes how essential the pecan was for Native Americans—by some calculations, an average pecan harvest had the food value of nearly 150,000 bison. McWilliams explains that, because of its natural edibility, abundance, and ease of harvesting, the pecan was left in its natural state longer than any other commercial fruit or nut crop in America. Yet once the process of "improvement" began, it took less than a century for the pecan to be almost totally domesticated. Today, more than 300 million pounds of pecans are produced every year in the United States—and as much as half of that total might be exported to China, which has fallen in love with America's native nut. McWilliams also warns that, as ubiquitous as the pecan has become, it is vulnerable to a "perfect storm" of economic threats and ecological disasters that could wipe it out within a generation. This lively history suggests why the pecan deserves to be recognized as a true American heirloom.

From Booklist Pecans are America's native nut, one rarely seen outside North American kitchens. Although the New World readily exported tobacco, tomatoes, chili peppers, and potatoes to Europe, there was simply no market for pecans, perhaps because they seemed too similar to Europeans' walnuts and because pecan wood is not generally desirable for lumber. From the beginning, pecans were harvested from the wild, but growing demand soon rendered such foraging obsolete. By the turn of the twentieth century, advances in grafting made pecan orchards possible, and the number of pecan trees increased exponentially, especially in Georgia. The invention of corn syrup gave birth to pecan pie, and the pecan became indissolubly linked with Southern cuisine. Recent years have witnessed a remarkable and hugely profitable resurgence in pecan cultivation due to explosive demand for the nut from China, where pecans' exotic novelty has transformed the humble nut into a coveted status symbol. --Mark Knoblauch "This excellent and charming story describes a tree that endured numerous hardships to become not only a staple of Southern cuisine but an American treasure." - Ann Wilberton, Pace University Library, New York, Library Journal "Writer and historian James McWilliams chronicles the fascinating rise of the familiar and delicious foodstuff known as the buttery main ingredient in Southern staples such as pralines and pecan pie." - Atlanta Journal Constitution "McWilliams's previous writing embraces food and agriculture from a deliciously human point of view. Here, spurred by a personal interest in the pecan tree in his own yard, he pays homage to a subject of particular interest (and pleasure) to Texans." - Texas Books in "Historian and writer James McWilliams proves an expert guide to the history of 'America's most economically significant tree.'" - Country Gardens's 'Gardener's Bookshelf' "Food historian McWilliams, sparked by the realization that he knew nothing about the wild pecan tree that dominated his backyard, wrote this volume as an endeavour of curiosity. Delving into various aspects of the *Carya illinoensis* (named for Illinois, a fertile area for these indigenous trees) and their nuts, the book treats readers to a multidimensional exploration of a surprisingly fascinating subject [...] McWilliams marches through American (and pre-American) history, viewing all through the lens of the pecan, and in doing so exposes the very personality of the tree and nut analogous to Americans themselves: willful, hardened, wild and dynamic. Summing Up: High recommended." - Choice About the Author James McWilliams is a historian and writer whose books include *Just Food: Where Locavores Get It Wrong and How We Can Truly Eat Responsibly* and *A Revolution in Eating: How the Quest for Food Shaped America*. His writing on food, agriculture, and animals has appeared in the *New York Times*, *Harpers*, the *Atlantic*, the *Washington Post*, *Slate*, *Forbes*, *Travel and Leisure*, the *Los Angeles Times*, the *International Herald Tribune*, the *Christian Science Monitor*, and the *Texas Observer*, where he has been a contributing writer since 2002. McWilliams is also a contributor to *Freakonomics.com* and a winner of the Hiatt Prize in the Humanities.