



STORAGE HINTS FOR PECANS

by
David Picha, Professor
(Horticulture) LSU AgCenter
and
John Pyzner, Associate Professor
LSU AgCenter, LCES
Pecan Research-Extension Station

Although pecans are often described as a semi-perishable product, proper storage techniques must be used to maintain good nut quality. Poor storage conditions often lead to darkening of the kernel and rancidity of the oils, thus destroying the natural flavor and aroma of the nuts.

Pecans should be harvested as soon as they fall from the tree (pecan quality deteriorates rapidly if nuts remain on the ground for extended periods of time) and dried to remove excess moisture. Drying can usually be accomplished by storing the nuts in a warm dry room for approximately 2 weeks. Pecans with a high moisture content (greater than 6%) do not store well.

Pecans should be stored under refrigerated conditions. Storage life of the nut is extended by lowering the temperature. The average shelf life for pecans at several storage temperatures is shown below.

Storage Temperature	Average Shelf Life	
	Unshelled	Shelled
70°F	6 months	3-4 months
45°F	9 months	6 months
32°F	18 months	12 months
20°F	30 months	18 months
0°F	6-8 years	6-8 years

Unshelled pecans can be stored for a longer period of time than shelled nuts. The unbroken shell protects the kernel from bruising and offers some protection against oxidation and rancidity of the kernels.

If pecans are refrigerated or frozen, they should be placed in an air-tight container. Pecan meats readily absorb odors from other foods, resulting in off flavors. If pecans are to be stored at room temperature for an extended period of time, they should be held in containers that are adequately ventilated. Avoid storing pecans that have not been dried properly in plastic bags.

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