

It's harvest time in Crystal City, and Rio Grande Organics gears up to get the precious pecan crop harvested before any weather disasters strike.

Check out how our harvest season gets under way as our tree shakers move into action. This machine clamps ahold of the tree, and uses a powerful hydraulic engine to shake the tree vigorously. The ground under this tree is littered with pecans that have just been shaken off. Note the sweepers in front of and behind each wheel; these devices gently move the pecans to the side of the wheels as the vehicle moves through the orchard.

Next, the cluster in image two shows the progression of ripening pecan nuts. The nut on the right is at the stage where the green shuck is beginning to split open along the suture lines. The nut in the left center area shows the shuck fully open and drying to a brown coloration. In the last month prior to harvest, the nuts are susceptible to shuck decline disease and the shuckworm; both will keep the shuck from opening normally and will result in damaged nut meat.

In the next cluster, all of the shucks have opened normally, and the nuts will easily fall from the tree when shaking pressure is applied. The nuts can actually remain in this loosely held position for months.

In the fourth image, our senior organic consultant, Robert Sandner, stands in front of the first load of pecans harvested in 2006. Some of the pecans are still inside of their green shuck. A special machine in our cleaning plant will remove the shucks so that the nuts can dry out and be shelled. The 2006 harvest is very special to us, as it marks the end of our three year transitional period. The pecans harvested from our Quemado, TX orchard will be our first large 'Certified Organic' crop.

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