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The Pecan Tree (Corrie Herring Hooks Series)

Jane Manaster

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Travel anywhere in the southern United States today, and you will find pecan trees, either growing wild in the fertile flood plains of streams and rivers, or cultivated in orchards for profit. So popular are pecans that Thomas Jefferson once wrote home from Paris for a supply, while many people nowadays consider their holidays incomplete without a pecan pie. This inviting and enlightening book explores the natural history, cultivation, and uses of the pecan tree for a general readership. Jane Manaster pieces together a fascinating mosaic of the peoples caught up in the pecan story - Native Americans who subsisted on pecans and traded them with Spanish explorers, the European immigrants and their American descendants who settled the southern states and began cultivating the pecan in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, African-Americans, including a slave named Antoine who first grafted pecan saplings in the 1840s, and Mexican-Americans who cracked and shelled millions of Texas pecans in the struggle to make ends meet. Manaster also describes the natural history of the pecan tree, including its life cycle, the development of the many cultivated varieties of pecans that we enjoy today, and the predators and diseases that pecan growers must combat. She chronicles growers' successful efforts to extend the pecan's original range eastward from the Mississippi River basin to Florida and westward all the way to California. She also charts the growth of the commercial pecan industry into the largest native orchard crop in America, with centers of activity in Georgia, Texas, New Mexico, and Arizona. Not forgetting the pecan's popularity in candy and baked goods, Manaster includes over twentytraditional and modern recipes for such delights as pralines, candied pecans, pecan pie, and pecan logs. With such a wealth of information in so readable a format, The Pecan Tree will find a wide audience among pecan lovers and growers everywhere.

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Leslie Mickle:

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