

HANDLING BLACK WALNUT SEED

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Walnuts are collected by nursery personnel from sources within a days travel time of the nursery. The Walnut Associations from all sections of the State or bordering states supplement the nursery collection. The amounts furnished by the Association depends on the local supply and anticipated seedling demands.

The husks are removed with a mechanical huller consisting of a series of chains fastened to a central axle that turns inside a spiral drum. The drum is made with 1/2-inch construction rod coils spaced approximately 1/2-inch apart so the hulls can fall through. The axle can be turned by a gasoline motor mounted on the machine, or by a farm tractor pulley. The husks are literally beaten from the nuts.

The nuts are dumped into a large basin of water, such as a moss tub. The good ones sink to the bottom: thus, the faulty nuts are easily removed.

As the nuts are dehusked, they are put into stratification between layers of sand. The stratification bed is a pen built on top of the ground. A yard sprinkler is used to keep the bed wet until the winter rains begin. The above ground storage gives better results than a pit due to the more fluctuating temperatures.

We ship nuts throughout the regular season, but we advise planters to request deliveries after February 1. The danger of loss by predators is lessened by delaying plantings until near germinating time, and the loss from drying out by holding in improper storage after delivery is somewhat reduced.

The nuts are shipped in empty plastic fertilizer bags with a handful of wet moss to hold moisture during transit, and in case of delayed plantings.

Walnut seed orchards are being established from superior trees for a future supply of seed. Specimens from the different divisions of the State are to be put into separate orchards and the seed will be shipped into their respective areas. Orchards will be set up in different sections of the State for assurance of a supply each year.

Discussion

Q. (Bacon) You don't see the increased cost as a discouragement to planting?

A. (Churchwell) No. The increased cost of walnut trees warrants an increase in seed from superior trees.