

# Industry Spotlight

## Wagon Hammock Nursery

*By Samantha McLeod, Executive Director GPGA*

**B**ack in August I had the pleasure of attending Savage Equipment's customer appreciation luncheon in Baconton, Georgia. While there I had the opportunity to meet



**Siblings, Debbie Jordan and Mike Jordan in front of Wagon Hammock Nursery office & storefront.**

a brother/sister team who were kind enough to let me feature them in this issue's Industry Spotlight.

Mike Jordan and Debbie Jordan are the owners and operators of Wagon Hammock Nursery near Lyons, Georgia. Wagon Hammock is an established and respected wholesale grower of premium quality shade and ornamental trees and specimen-grade shrubs. The brother/sister duo, following the passion from their father, also harvests around 60 acres of pecan trees.

Wagon Hammock was founded in 1989 by Mike Jordan and his father, Larry Jordan. Prior to the nursery, Larry Jordan had found his passion in several other agriculturally

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**Samantha McLeod**

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based business endeavors. His children delighted in sharing with me their father's colorful and varied ventures in agribusiness.

Mr. Larry Jordan was originally born on an orange grove in Winter Haven, Florida with much of his family residing in the Toombs County, Georgia area. His first job after college was a salesman for Coca-Cola. Continuing in the sales side of the business and getting back to his roots in agriculture, he advanced to sales for Purina in the Okeechobee, Florida area. His interest in the feed side of the business led him to pursue opening his own feed store in Okeechobee known as Jordan Feed, a Moorman Feed dealer. Jordan then branched off into the equipment side of the business where he became the owner of Okeechobee Tractor.

After several years in the feed and tractor businesses, he had the opportunity to get into the Dairy Heifer Development/Replacement business. Several years later, Jordan decided to sell the stores and invest in his Dairy Heifer Replacement operation by purchasing land in Toombs County, which he deemed "Laranda Farms." He raised



**Wagon Hammock Pecan Orchard**

roughly 2,500 replacement heifers a year and often facilitated the work of researchers from Pfizer Research, the University of Georgia and the University of Florida. With strong dedication and passion for anything he does, in 2004, Larry Jordan served as President of the Professional Dairy Heifer Growers Association.

Since moving to Toombs County area in 1974, Jordan

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had broadened his horizons to other segments in agriculture by getting into the nursery business. He started by planting 500 live oaks. The following year, he planted an additional 1000 live oaks along with several crepe myrtles and wax myrtles. By 1989, Jordan's son, Mike, entered into the family business as operations manager. Without a prior background in horticulture, Mike learned the ins and outs of business on the job from day to day --performing var-

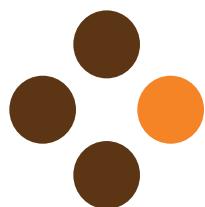


Live Oaks: The first variety at Wagon Hammock Nursery.



Pictured: Mike Jordan in front of a nearly ancient pecan tree, still producing!

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ious tasks from toting fertilizer buckets to digging trees. His passion for the orchard helped drive him to succeed in the business.

Mike's sister Debbie Jordan joined the family business in 2005 and said, "Coming back to the family farm was the best decision I have ever made."

Shortly thereafter, Larry offered his children the op-



Above and at right: Beautiful magnolias are also among the many items the nursery offers.



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portunity to buy the nursery and they gladly took him up on his offer to run the business they loved.

During this time of building and growing their nursery business, Larry had always had a soft spot for the pecan tree. On the side, he would grow his own pecan trees, not for sale through the nursery, but as his private orchard.

"He was always experimenting with the pecans. He always had a passion for them, which spread to Debbie and I," stated Mike Jordan.

The Jordan's now have roughly 60 acres of pecan trees and love being stewards to their orchards. They grow Sumner, Desirable and Oconee varieties.

In addition to pecans, Mike and Debbie have further diversified Wagon Hammock Nursery by venturing into the olive industry -- planting about 10 acres of olives 4 years ago. In preparation for their first olive crop, the Jordan's are investing in their facilities at Wagon Hammock Nursery. They are currently building a new facility in which they will be able to have cold storage for both the olives and pecans, along with a milling operation to mill the olives to olive oil and possibly even mill the pecans to



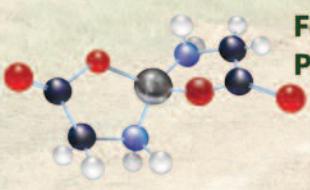
**Wagon Hammock Olive grove soon to be in production.**  
pecan oil one day.

Wagon Hammock Nursery is a beautiful operation with a bright future ahead in the pecan industry, as well as their newly planted olive grove and their established nursery. I found Mike and Debbie to be extraordinary, hard-working people and they truly make a great team. I am fortunate for the opportunity to visit their operation and am grateful for the time they spent with me.

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