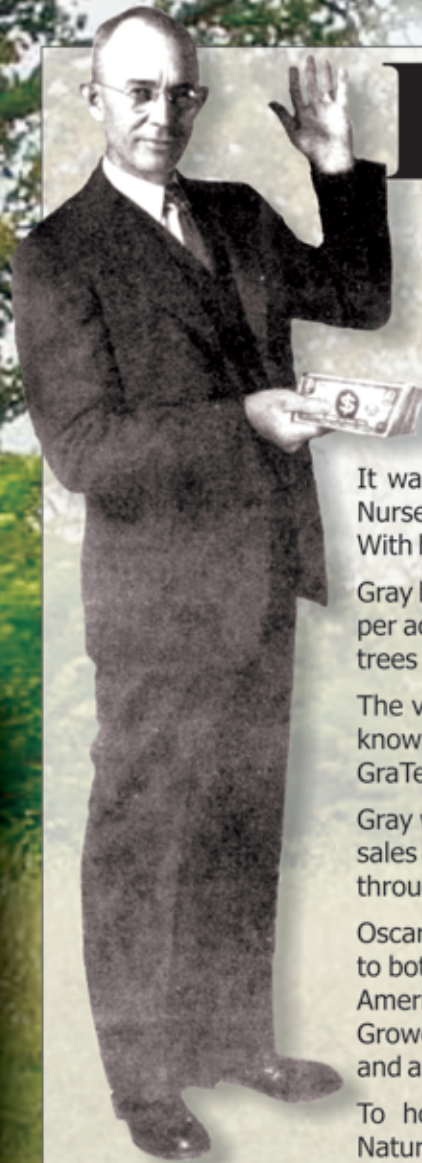


O.S. GRAY NATURAL AREA

“THE GRAYWAY IS THE BEST WAY!”



If the pecan tree ever had an advocate, it was Oscar “O.S.” Gray. And, thanks to Gray's advocacy, Arlington's pecan tree population is a valuable asset today.

Oscar Gray grew up on a small farm near Terrell, Texas. While recovering from typhoid, his grandfather brought him Texas Department of Agriculture yearbooks to read. This gift sparked Gray's interest in agriculture and inspired him to attend Texas A&M University, where he studied agronomy.

After graduating college, Gray and his wife, Elsie, moved to Arlington in 1926 so he could teach agronomy at North Texas Agricultural College, now the University of Texas at Arlington. While teaching, Gray bought 46 acres of land to plant pecan trees that would serve as a “living laboratory” for his students. He also planned to use the tree grove as a means to subsidize his income.

It wasn't long before Gray's tree grove turned in to a full-time commitment and became established as O.S. Gray Nursery. The nursery was a family business, and Gray's wife and two sons, Oscar Jr. and Jack, all worked at the nursery. With his business blossoming, Gray decided to quit his teaching job and concentrate on the nursery.

Gray bucked the traditional approach to pecan tree farming and developed a high-density operation. He planted 50 trees per acre and pruned them by machine. Where normal pecan trees would take 20 years for profitable production, Gray's trees reached that mark in just five years.

The varieties of pecans that Gray propagated were large and meaty with paper thin shells, a distinction that became known as “papershell” pecans. Additionally, at his nursery, Gray developed six new varieties of pecan trees including the GraTex, GraKing, GraZona, GraBohls, GraCross and GraPark Giant.

Gray was not just an innovative pecan farmer; he was a shrewd businessman as well. O.S. Gray Nursery provided retail sales of trees, plants and fertilizers. It also maintained a healthy mail order and wholesale business, shipping pecan trees throughout the world.

Oscar “O.S.” Gray died in 1977 at age 82. A resident of Arlington for more than a half century, he sustained a strong bond to both his community and his business. He maintained memberships in many professional organizations including the American Horticultural Society and the Texas Pecan Growers Association. He was also an active Rotarian and a Mason with over 50 years of service.

To honor Gray's influence on Arlington, O.S. Gray Natural Area was dedicated on November 2, 1997. The 20 acre park, located on Gray's original tree grove includes, a playground, parking lot and trail.

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Cover of the O.S. Gray Nursery Catalog



O.S. Gray Nursery, October 14, 1941



Front cover of The Pecan Quarterly magazine, 1978