

QUICK MEALS

Don't have a lot of time but still want to get a hot meal on the table? Check out our Fast Food feature every Saturday in the Dwell section or get more inspiration online at StarNewsOnline.com/food.

Going nuts for fresh pecans

Sit up and pay attention now. I'm going to pass on to you one of my fall/winter gourmet secrets and I'm not going to say this twice.

Fresh pecans. That's right. Right-off-the-tree, Wayne County shelled pecan halves.

It's entirely possible that you think you've already had really fresh pecans, because you paid an arm and a leg from some bulk bin or got them in a fancy gift basket from a gourmet store.

But if you didn't find them in a refrigerated section of the store or pull them out of the shell yourself, chances are pretty good that you got nuts that were roasted to promote shelf storage. They're OK, but they can't hold a candle to the real thing.

Please forgive me if I am exhibiting the zeal of the converted, but it was my fate to grow up as a Yankee.

The New Jersey suburbs where I spent my childhood didn't have any pecans trees in the backyards. We had apple trees and grapevines, and my dad was a master at growing zucchini, but my exposure to fresh pecans was limited to my grandmother's nut bowl at Christmas.

About three years ago, I was fortunate enough to make the acquaintance of Tim and Karen Haithcock from Indian Springs Pecans in Goldsboro.

They wandered into my store one beautiful sum-

FOOD



CULINARY CONFIDENCE
BETH FLAHERTY

mer day and asked me if I was interested in buying some fresh pecans.

To be honest, I didn't really know the difference between a fresh pecan and any other pecans, but I decided to give it a try.

Karen called me the following November, just about two weeks before Thanksgiving and I placed a somewhat small order. When the nuts came in, I tried a few - and then promptly called her back and placed a more substantial order. I've been a customer ever since.

The Indian Springs Orchard has about 250 trees. There are six different

tree varieties, and they're all 15 years or younger.

Tim's main occupation is as an attorney, and he claims that his orchard is his therapy - but you only have to talk to him for a minute to know he's a serious grower. The nuts are grown as organically as possible, with natural fertilizers and only spot applications of pesticides.

Harvest usually begins in October and goes through December. They're packaged and refrigerated right off the tree.