

Pecan Gap Pickings 113003

I had the opportunity to poke around in the blue-gray and tan Pecan Gap Chalk in San Antonio yesterday before burning a Sunday in the office. I've not spent much time in this formation before, and it was a pleasing experience to find different species, although they were few and far between.

For an hour I found nothing but isolated, ugly little oysters. As I was heading back toward the truck, I looked down and spotted a glob of articulated gray plates imbedded in a large tan slab of chalk. I immediately knew I had my first *Echinocorys* urchin. 10 minutes of work allowed me to channel around the fossil, then snap off the pedestal. The fossil was only about $\frac{1}{4}$ exposed, but I had enough surrounding matrix to take it home and prep it out with proper tools. After an hour of alternating between the air scribe, vinegar baths, and the brass brush, the end result is shown below:





I only wish I had a “before” picture to illustrate how encased this fossil was in the matrix. My recent consultations with experts such as Farish and Katz led me to purchase the right equipment and adopt the proper techniques for bringing the most out in my fossils.

The Pecan Gap gives up some cephalopods as well, as shown in the next photo. The ammonite barely gave up its position by exposing a small portion of a whorl. I was able to relieve the matrix from above, and the ammonite was spectacular in the ground. I should have cut a deeper channel around it to bring it out intact. It broke into 3 big pieces during extrication, and the center whorl disintegrated as it was only about .020 thick. This compaction is typical of all the Pecan Gap fossils I found yesterday.



To the immediate right of the ammonite is a neat little heteromorph cephalopod broken in 3 pieces in a tan layer. At the extreme left and right of the frame are compressed baculites, forerunners of the squid.

Much as a fisherman enjoys fishing new water and landing different fish, a fossil hunter enjoys hunting new formations and finding different fossils. This excursion was no exception.