

THE AVOCADO IN SANTO DOMINGO

SEÑOR JOSÉ RAMON LOPEZ,
DIRECTOR GENERAL OF THE BUREAU OF STATISTICS

AVOCADO—Family of Lauraceous—Persea Gratissima—Guertner-Laurus
Persea—Lmneo.

The tree is from 5 to 15 meters high with fairly wide branches, starting at about two meters from the ground.

LAND

The best soil for the avocado is the humus (mouldy), almost pure. It prospers also in soil of inferior quality, but with less exuberance.

TEMPERATURE

The best climate in this country is the one with temperature in summer from 34.5 degrees to 35 degrees C., nevertheless this does not hinder it from bearing in heights of 1.000 or more meters above the level of the sea, and where the heat never attains more than 28 degrees and in winter goes down to 0 deg. C.

VARIETIES

Avocados are classified by the form of their leaves. There are three classes in the Dominican Republic, "Oblong," "Macrophilla" and "Vulgaris," but the usual way of selecting them here is by the color and size of the fruit. There are purple avocados and green avocados.

These differences in classes are also subdivided in large and small, round and piniform necks.

The smallest size in this country weighs more than a pound, the largest exceeds three pounds and often weighs four pounds. The seedless kind grown in Florida, U. S. A., has never been imported nor grown in this country.

TASTE

As a rule, the largest avocados of any form, color or class are the better tasting. Besides its excellent flavor, slightly sweet, it leaves an agreeable impression on the palate, such as curded milk or butter. These are called *Sebosos*, (greasy). Others also very agreeable are very sweet.

The kind least appreciated have a very small proportion of grease and plenty of water and in color resemble wild grass. These are used for nourishing pigs.

THE BEST AVOCADOS

The avocados of the Province of Espaillat are famous for their size and flavor, although similar classes abound in other parts of the Republic. In the neighborhood of San Cristobal, Province of Santo Domingo, there are classes that compete advantageously with the Pollock.

There was a tree in the yard of house No. 67, Sanchez Street, that gave avocados of a green color, round shape, and weighing over three pounds; the pulp of same was about one inch thick at the lower end. This tree died in 1917.

In the yard of a house fronting Mercedes square, that belongs to the Church of the same name, there is a tree that bears the Piniform Neck, of more than three pounds weight, and of excellent taste.

FRUCTIFICATION

Trees begin to bear five years after planting, and often earlier if the soil is good. . . .

EXTENT OF CULTIVATION

To the present date nobody in this country has developed an avocado plantation. In each *Conuco* (little agricultural patch) there are one or more trees that have sprung up from seeds thrown away after the pulp has been eaten.

DIFFERENT WAYS OF EATING

The manner of eating preferred in the cities is by cutting the avocado in small slices when at the table, and mixing them with the soup, taking a slice with each spoonful of soup. It is also consumed in slices sprinkled with powdered salt and sometimes adding a bit of pepper, and generally accompanied with meat or food. Salads are also made of the avocado, alone or mixed with salted fish; in this last way the character of the salad is changed from dietetical to aperitive. Some persons smash it with salt and vinegar, while others sprinkle it with sugar, making a delicious dessert.