

## SEVEN TRUTHS ABOUT THE AVOCADO

### D. W. COOLIDGE

**Truth 1.** The avocado is one of the most beautiful evergreen trees that grows. Its spreading branches afford shade and comfort to man, mockingbird and mealybug. Why plant pepper, acacia and other trees where you can grow the avocado?

**Truth 2.** The avocado tree can be, and is, successfully grown in California, particularly in the southern part. I haven't the exact figures, but I am assured that there are today more than 500 acres of avocado trees planted in orchard form, and perhaps as many more are grown in the gardens surrounding our homes.

**Truth 3.** The avocado tree will grow and bear fruit as regularly as any other fruit tree when the proper varieties are planted in proper localities in Southern California, and contrary to the belief of many the avocado is not over particular about the kind of soil it is grown in. I have seen very fine fruits grown in adobe, light sandy loam and decomposed granite soils. Although the tree is indigenous only to the tropics, we have varieties fully as hardy as any of the citrus, and the scope of this industry is wider than is generally believed. In beginning the industry we have all planted many inferior varieties, but each year we are gaining knowledge, and in planting nowadays we eliminate some of the varieties that a few years ago seemed desirable.

**Truth 4.** The fruit of the avocado is about the most tasteful and nourishing food that grows out of the ground. I repeat what I said at the dinner at the Maryland two years ago. I would persist in eating avocados if I knew they were a little less poisonous than arsenic, I like the taste so well; and if they were as bitter as quinine and in every way disagreeable to the palate I would continue to eat them, knowing their beneficial effects as a food and medicine. I maintain that the most delicate stomach can take the avocado when animal fat would upset it. I have heard that if one about to embark on a sea voyage would eat no other food than the avocado for the preceding 24 hours seasickness would be unknown.

**Truth 5.** Growing avocados has proved the most profitable of any horticultural experiment yet conducted in California. You all know for what this fruit is selling. From \$1 to \$2 each for fruits weighing a pound or more. One of our largest growers assured me that he had received as high as \$14 per dozen wholesale for his fruits and that a great part of the crop was marketed at from \$7 to \$9 per dozen.

Now it doesn't seem to me that any such prices will be obtained when we have thousands of acres of avocados where we now have a few thousand trees, but I maintain that there can never be any serious overproduction because there are only two small areas, Southern California and Southern Florida, where the avocado can be grown, and when it is considered that perhaps only about 1,000 growers living in the

two favored sections have to grow this valuable food product for 100,000,000 people, I ask the question, How is it possible to overdo the avocado business? Another point, when we consider the proportions that the citrus product, merely a confection, has reached, what should we expect from the avocado, an all around food that people will continue to buy because they like its taste and because of its nourishing food value. The government experts figure that a pound of avocado has as many food units as a pound of meat or eggs, and should it ultimately sell on this basis, there is 25 to 30 cents each for fruits weighing a pound. I really believe when the time comes that I can have avocados for 366 days in the year, I will cut meat entirely out of my diet.

**Truth 6.** One hundred years from now history will record that the highest civilization will cluster around the sections where the avocado is grown. The strongest people physically and mentally, the happiest and most beautiful children will be those who make the avocado, instead of meat, their daily diet. I have often marveled how babies and very young children take to the avocado at once. If I have a greater love for anything than the avocado, it is for ruddy, happy children.

I am one who has always believed in the human race, who has always believed that man is constantly rising, and while I am not a strict vegetarian, I have almost reached the point where I do not wish to be a participant in the slaughter of beautiful animals simply for food. I am sure I could never content myself on a diet of turnips or starchy vegetables alone—we must have fats; but the avocado comes in to fill this need. I say, speed up avocado growing, hasten the day when we can have a sufficient quantity of this fruit so that it may be sold at a price that all can afford.

**Truth Seven** is a definition of a lost opportunity. Everyone living in Southern California has the opportunity to possess for himself and family this most delectable of all foods. Every day that he fails to plant from one to 100 trees is surely a lost opportunity.

## **PRESIDENT SALLMON FOLLOWING MR. COOLIDGE**

Those of us who read farm journals of Southern California are familiar with the articles of a man who has the pen of a ready writer and whose message is always readable, interesting and helpful. We are glad to hear him here; his voice is new to us. I am glad to introduce the Farm Advisor of Los Angeles County, Mr. Robert G. Hodgson.