

California Avocado Association 1933 Yearbook 18: 122-123

DEPARTMENTS OF AGRICULTURE AND FORESTS

American Colony, Jerusalem

August 13, 1933.

Dear Dr. Coit:

I beg to acknowledge receipt of your letter of the 19th of June, 1933, in which you ask me to send you some information on Avocado growing in Palestine.

The first avocado trees in Palestine are said to have been planted by French monks at Latroun Monastery in 1908. Budded avocado trees were later introduced from California in 1924, only ten trees were imported (Fuerte and Dickinson) yielding their first fruits in 1927. These trees have made good growth but are bearing only fair crops.

The largest avocado orchard growing at present in the country belongs to an ex-Californian, Mr. Kaufman, who has about 60 trees. Our last statistics show that there are only about 300 avocado trees in the orchards of Palestine. There are also about 800 trees and seedlings in the various nurseries.

The climate of Palestine seems to be suitable for avocado culture and yet avocado trees have suffered considerably during the last few years either from the cold spell in 1932 or from the hot sirocco winds in 1933.

In January, 1932, a number of young Guatemalan seedlings were killed by the cold while larger trees have suffered; the Mexican trees have, however, withstood the cold. During June, 1933, Palestine experienced some very hot eastern winds which caused considerable damage to all avocado trees in the country. Young shoots were scorched and a considerable amount of fruit dropped.

Stocks for avocados used in Palestine are the Guatemalan (*Persea Americana*) and the Mexican (*Persea Americana* var. *drymifolia*). The latter stock is preferred being hardier and is easier to bud.

The following varieties of avocados are being tried in Palestine: Fuerte, Dickinson, Duke, Taft, Collinson, Puebla, Royal, Challenge, Miller, Spinks, Dutton, Lyon, Anaheim, Prince, Princess, Nabal and Ganter.

The interest in this culture is increasing among the growers of Palestine as they are afraid that citrus is being overplanted and some other profitable trees must be introduced. There are good prospects for avocado culture in Palestine provided we find a market for the fruit.

There is still a lot to be done in the study of varieties suitable to the county, propagation problems, pollination and fruit setting difficulties, pests and diseases, etc.

The commercial production of avocados in Palestine will proceed slowly and with caution as we are taking all the necessary precautions of studying all the limiting factors of this industry before recommending its extensive cultivation to the public.

Very truly yours,
A.GRASOVSKY,
Senior Horticultural Officer.