

The Cherimoya in Argentina

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(Translation)

The cultivation of the cherimoya in this country is very old. According to data which I have been able to gather, the cherimoyas were brought here from Bolivia, possibly from the region of Tarija or Santa Cruz de la Sierra. There is no record that named varieties of cherimoyas were imported from the exterior, and the existing orchards are almost all of seedlings grown from seeds of the better fruits.

In the regions of Salta, Tucuman, and Jujuy, where about 95% of the orchards are located, the method of budding that has been and is still in use is the "umbonata como pie" (bent like a foot, or bent at right angle) which method, up to the present time, has given the best results.

At the present time we have in Salta a selection of the best varieties of cherimoya—varieties which have been chosen for their excellent fruits, good production, and greatest resistance to frost. This selection consists of nine varieties, and the distribution of these varieties has already begun.

The difficulties which we have in extending on a larger scale the cultivation of the cherimoya consist of the small production of the trees under cultivation and of the poor resistance to occasional freezes in the areas being cultivated.

ROLINIA ROOT-STOCK INCREASES HARDINESS

In regard to increasing the resistance to frost, the writer started years ago to experiment with the **Rolinia emarginata** (Rolinia is a plant belonging to the botanical family "Annonaceae") a species which grows wild in Misiones, Formosa, and other areas bordering Paraguay, where it has resisted temperatures as low as 10° centigrade below freezing, on certain occasions, without injury.

These experiments are producing good results and apparently are increasing the resistance, rusticity, and perfect affinity of the cherimoya, and apparently also increasing its productiveness. There are as yet no definite conclusions, but these experiments have already resulted in increased resistance to frost, and greater rusticity in general.

Aside from the **Rolinia emarginata**, I am trying out the intermediate Rolinia, *Annona nutans*, and *Annona glabra*, working towards the same objective. Upon my recommendations in this regard, experiments along the same line have been and are being made in the State of Sao Paulo; and the results obtained from the use of *Rolinia emarginata*, as I was able to ascertain personally during my last stay in that Brazilian

State, are very flattering and identical to the results obtained by me in Misiones, Argentina.

In regard to the poor production, the cause of which is claimed to be improper pollination, very little has been done outside of trying to produce vegetatively the plants which are the most productive; but these selections have given very poor, if not negative results. I have made a short study of this subject and summarized my conclusions in a small article entitled "Sterility and Pollination in the Cherimoya."

At the present time we have throughout the entire Republic, about 8,000 trees in production and some 3,000 not yet producing, or in nurseries.

This fruit, as in the case of the avocado, is shipped to market in boxes containing a dozen, or a half-dozen fruits. Larger boxes have not been used as yet. The prices for this fruit are very high. The wholesale price is the same as for avocados, namely, from 50c to \$2.50 (from 10c to about 52c United States currency) per fruit, and, on occasions, it is possible to obtain even higher prices.

The present production falls far short of supplying the demand in this one market (the Federal District) and annually there is imported from Chile a certain quantity which sells for the same price. Although the quality of the Chilean fruit is similar to ours, it has not as yet reached the fine quality of our product. The Chilean fruit comes from the northern part of that country, especially from around La Serena.

Many sub-tropical fruits do very well, and, it may be said, reach perfection in the Argentine. For example, in the case of the avocado, this fruit has been classified as the very best in the London market, where some thousands of kilos (a kilo is the equivalent of 2.2 pounds) are shipped annually. In many large areas in the northern part of our country, the soil and climate are perfectly suited to the cultivation of these fruits.

CHIEF HANDICAP IS LACK OF NURSERY TREES

The reason why plantings have not been increased, in view of the ideal soil and climatic conditions which exist, as well as in view of the high prices which these fruits command, is due solely and exclusively to the lack of nurseries devoted to the propagation of these species, whether they be private nurseries or Government nurseries. This is certainly a lamentable fact. However, there is a growing tendency at the present time toward increasing the production of these fruits.

The organizations and private individuals who have introduced these plants and who have risked their capital in such enterprises are loath to make available buds or scions for propagation, and therefore in this country it is only possible to obtain seedlings.

Another contributing factor is the fact that our Department of Agriculture has completely neglected anything having to do with subtropical and tropical horticulture, and lacks competent and specialized personnel in this branch of agriculture. Therefore the diffusion of these cultures throughout the country is very small. At the present time the production of these fruits can only be undertaken by those persons who have available the required capital and cultural knowledge, requisites which are not within the reach of the small agriculturist in the Argentine.