

California Avocado Society 1948 Yearbook 33: 137-138

The Texas Avocado Society

The Texas Avocado Society was organized on March 23, 1948, at Weslaco, Texas, under by-laws similar to those of the California Society. The U.S.D.A. Citrus Rootstock Laboratory at the Texas Experiment Station at Weslaco, Texas, was made the headquarters of the Society. A charter for the Society was obtained from the Secretary of State for Texas at Austin, Texas.

The membership of the Society has grown from an original membership of eight to a present membership of ninety-six. Among its members are not only residents of the Rio Grande Valley, but a number of California Avocado specialists.

The purpose of the Texas Society is to study Avocados. Its main effort now is directed toward searching for suitable varieties. This function is invested in its Variety Committee, with Dr. R. H. Cintron as Chairman.

There are at present no large scale commercial avocado operations in Texas. The largest consists of eight acres at the Hoblitzelle Ranch at Mercedes. There are in addition several acre size plantings at La Feria, McAllen, Pharr, Harlingen and Monte Alto, all in the Lower Rio Grande Valley.

However, most of the Valley trees occur as 1 to 10 tree plantings in backyards. Such backyard plantings are particularly plentiful in Brownsville, Mercedes, and McAllen.

The varieties in the Valley represent a wide assortment of seedlings of Mexican, West Indian, and Guatemalan ancestry, plus several commercial varieties including the Fuerte from California and the Lula from Florida. The Variety Committee is recommending that planters set out an acre or two of several varieties and get a little experience in growing avocados before embarking on large scale commercial plantings. A dozen or so such trial plantings have gone in during the past year and many more are expected to go in during the coming year.

The Variety Committee is searching for adaptable varieties among the Valley seedlings, from seedlings in Mexico and from named varieties in Florida and California. The promising Valley seedlings and Mexican introductions are being grafted onto West Indian stocks and are being planted in variety collection plots at Hoblitzelle Ranch, Rio Farms, and at A. and I. College. Many are also being propagated and sold commercially, but an effort is being made to limit such plantings until the adaptability of the variety has been determined.

Many of the named varieties, mostly hybrids with some West Indian ancestry, are being brought in from Florida both for the variety test plots and for commercial plantings.

The Texas Society Members joined the California Society Members during the past year in exploring the region around Atlixco, Mexico for promising seedlings.

The area around Victoria, Mexico, was also explored. The Texas Society is principally concerned in searching for possible West Indian-Mexican hybrids. The West Indian

varieties are particularly well adapted to the Valley conditions except for hardiness to cold.

The Texas Society is also studying subtropical fruits other than avocados. The Mexican Fruit Fly quarantine now permits the planting of many of these fruits which were formerly prohibited. A survey is being made of what varieties we have in the Valley and many new introductions are being made from California and Florida.

The Society has held a general meeting in Weslaco and another at Brownsville. Both meetings were well attended and there was great interest among the members in avocados. The Society plans on publishing a Yearbook at the end of its first and each succeeding year to keep its members informed on pertinent avocado information, on the activities of its committees, and on the development of the local industry.

Commercial shipments of avocados from the Valley is still in the future and the development of the industry is likely to be gradual, but some of the Society members see it as a new major Valley fruit crop.

WILLIAM C. COOPER

Secretary and Treasurer