

PROGRESS REPORT ON FRUIT PICKING MACHINE

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The fruit picking machine being developed by the Department of Horticultural Science at Riverside has been in the field now for some weeks for initial testing purposes. The engineering design work and fabrication was done by the Space Equipment Corporation of Torrance, California, operating under contract with the University. The pictures shown include no equipment for conveying the fruit from the picker to bins. A contract has been entered into, however, for the engineering design and shop mock-ups of essential parts of this fruit conveying apparatus. We hope to have such equipment installed within a few months.

The speed and ease with which the operator can move himself about over the tree and into it is greater than anticipated.



FIGURE 1. Demonstration of fruit picking machine by Dan Seamount, Assistant Specialist, Agricultural Experiment Station, Riverside. Mr. William Cowan and Mr. Phil Newman of Calavo, Gene Dagerman of Space Equipment Corporation, and Mr. Wally Wright of The Irvine Company are observing the test. The operator is shown with his swing seat swung to the left so that he may work directly up against fruit bearing branches.



FIGURE 2. Dan Seamount is shown working within the branches of larger tree. The machine is self-propelled and self-guiding. The guide discs can be seen in the front center of the picture. The operator can lift himself up over and into the tree as he wishes.

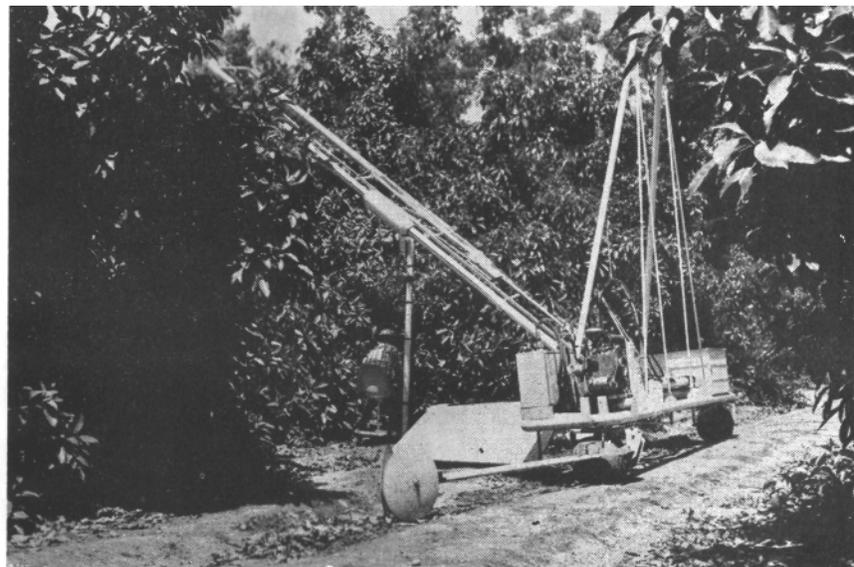


FIGURE 3. For low lying branches the operator can literally seat himself on the ground, picking there in a very comfortable fashion. The tall upright parts of the machine are called the mast, the slanting super-structure is called the boom. From this boom hangs the swing seat. By means of his electrical switches at his feet, the picker can change the slant of the boom and move his swing seat up and down at his will. Also, he can drive the machine forward or back from the seat.