

2000 OLIVER ATKINS AWARD OF MERIT



**ALVYN LYPPS**

**Tree Propagator**

**Award presented by Len Francis.**

It certainly is an honor to present the Oliver Atkins Award of Merit. This award was created about six years ago to honor the people who have distinguished themselves in the field that Oliver loved — the nursery propagation field. Propagation is creating plants that are exactly what you want them to be.

The honoree today fits that mold, or should I say the *scion*. He is true to type. He is productive. He is progressive. Our honoree today is Alvin Lypps. Alvin, it is very good to have you and you wife, Katie, here today with us, and I will ask you to come up a little bit later after I say a little bit more about you.

In 1937, Alvin was introduced to avocados while in high school. He was in a vocational agricultural class and had the occasion to attend a budding and grafting demonstration. That encouraged Alvin to practice budding and grafting. After much trial and error he decided to try his skill on twelve avocado seedlings in his family's citrus grove. Much to his surprise he got three or four of them to take. In those days they did mostly wedge grafting, and several of his neighbors started asking him to graft their trees. This was the start of his business and career.

In 1947, Walter Beck started growing avocado trees in containers in a green house and this inspired Alvin to do the same. Over the years he has worked for the Stevens Nursery in Rincon, Barrett and Gebharts in Valley Center, and Bill Prey's nursery in

Fallbrook. For years he did grafting in greenhouses - usually 60,000 to 70,000 trees a year. Irvine Ranch had their own nursery and for ten years he budded 50,000 to 70,000 trees a year for them. He worked for Bill Prey's Nursery for 19 years. Over the years he has budded over 3 million small avocado trees. I came to know Alvin more for his work top working avocado trees — over 120,000 trees in his career. In the mid sixties and seventies, thousands of Zutanos, Bacons, and other thin skin varieties were grafted by his hand and by members of his family. They have left their mark in the avocado industry over the years. At present there is his son Joe, and David Lypps, Alvin's brother. His brother's protege, Sid Hernandez, is still working in the field of avocado and citrus. During his 50 plus years in the avocado and citrus business he found the work very rewarding and fulfilling. The work has been hard at times, but he has always loved doing it.

It is hard to purchase the right tools of the trade in grafting. Because he had welding experience when he worked for Pan American Airways, he was able to design and manufacture the tools he needed for grafting. Alvin also designed and made girdling tools for growers throughout the avocado industry. I even saw some of his tools in South Africa.

Right now he says that this last year has been very exciting for him. This was the year he and his wife celebrated their 50<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary and he celebrated his 80<sup>th</sup> birthday. Alvin, please come up here.

The plaque inscription states, "California Avocado Society Oliver Atkins Award of Excellence and Service presented to Alvin Lypps, for his many years of dedicated service to the Avocado Nursery Industry, on September 16<sup>th</sup> in the year 2000.

### **Alvin Lypps:**

Thank you very much. I really have had a wonderful life. I spent most of my time with avocados and citrus, of course, and I found it very, very rewarding. There are so many different experiences that I have had over the years. It has been a very enjoyable life and I wouldn't trade it for anything. I just hope I can continue to work with avocados and also keep up my expertise making tools and so forth. It is going to be a lot of fun for me, really.

I want to thank the California Avocado Society for choosing me for this honor, and I am sure I will cherish it for many years to come. Thank you very much.