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SIX YEARS EXPERIENCE WITH BUDDED AVOCADOS

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YORBA LINDA

Of the twenty-one varieties planted in 1914, the Fuerte is the only one proving entirely satisfactory. The fifty Fuerte trees averaged \$ 10 per tree the second year from planting, and the third year, (which included the June hot wave of 1917) \$6 per tree. The fourth year, at the time of this writing, October 1st, has every appearance of being far better than either of the other years.

The Dickey is the only other of the twenty-one varieties planted that has contributed one cent towards its keep. The Harman, Ganter and all other thin skin varieties have been top worked to commercial varieties, principally the Fuerte.

The Taft is acting very queerly. At two years of age quite a number blossomed and set fruit, and four of them matured from one to two fruits each; at three years of age several of them had from ten to one hundred fruits set, but the June hot wave got away with all of them; this year sixty per cent of the trees blossomed and set fruit, some of them as high as one hundred to a tree, but for some reason they have all dropped except about two dozen fruits on the sixty-eight trees.

The Atlixco set quite a number of fruits, but they have all dropped except six. The Sinaloa, Popocatepetl and Volcan have not even blossomed yet after four years of care. The Murrieta, after standing practically dormant for four years, took a notion to grow this spring and now looks as though it might make a tree. Have two Millers. Both are fruiting this year. Trapp set several hundred fruits, but all dropped except one. The Perfecto, planted in 1916, has seven very nice fruits on it this year. The Rey and Linda, planted in 1915 are both fruiting.

The Linda top worked on Chappelow and Atlixco three year old stock in 1916 are fruiting nicely this year, and fruit weighing five to nine ounces cut open shows an unusually small seed; fruit now hanging on the trees weigh from twelve to twenty-eight ounces, seven months growth. Some complain about the Linda drooping so badly that it is difficult to get a tree out of them. My Lindas have made good growth and I am inclined to think that if those having poor success had followed the instructions, given by practically all experienced horticulturists, of digging a good sized hole and filling it with top soil, it might have been different. Howard and Smith, in sending out their Los Angeles rose, send printed instructions with each shipment, directing that the hole should be two feet in depth by three feet in diameter, and eight inches of cow manure well tamped in the bottom of the hole, with eight inches of top soil on the manure, also well tamped. You are then ready to plant the rose. What is good for a rose is also, in my judgment, good for a tree. I have been using alfalfa in the bottom of all holes dug the past two years, and find it works very nicely. If I don't mistake my guess, the Linda will be wearing a blue ribbon before she is much older. The Lyon with me seems to be

healthy enough but a poor grower. Buds put in last summer (1917) made a growth of three to four inches, and instead of putting out a good growth this spring, did nothing but blossom. Even since rubbing off the blossoms they have made very little growth.

Sharpless top worked on four year old stock last year are making good growth. Have all of Mr. Knight's Guatemalan varieties, but was not fortunate enough to get any of Mr. Wilson Popenoe's Guatemalan budwood. I do not envy the man's position who made the distribution, for it is simply out of the question to please everyone and those who did not get the budwood no doubt think that they ought to have had it, instead of some of those who received it. However, I think the Bureau of Plant Industry of the Agricultural Department would have given better satisfaction all around by allowing their men in the field to make the distribution, as they know every grove and prominent avocado tree in the state and their owners; they also know the location where the buds would do the best, and that of course is what the Bureau wants.

Dr. Coit, Farm Adviser for Los Angeles County, made some very sensible suggestions in his article on bud selection, published in the November 1917 issue of the California Citrograph. I would add to those suggestions, for the avocado, that the buyer, where he has sufficient knowledge of budding, be permitted to cut his own budwood, as he then not only knows that he is getting buds from a good bearing tree, but also good bearing wood. The importance of selecting budwood from good bearing trees, as taught by Messrs. Shamel and Scott, cannot be impressed upon the buyer too strongly. Budwood has been cut from only twenty-five of the fifty Fuerte trees I planted in 1914; the other twenty-five, while bearing, have not done nearly so well, and ten of them I presume should be classed as drones. Practically all nurserymen are now cutting their budwood from bearing trees, but there are some, especially those with little knowledge of the business, getting their budwood wherever they can get it cheapest, regardless of quality. Of course in the beginning all budwood had to be taken from non-bearing trees, but judging from my own experience as above stated, one half of such buds are liable to produce poor bearing trees, if not drones. We are fortunate in having budwood brought to us by Messrs. E. E. Knight and Wilson Popenoe, cut from the very best bearing trees in Guatemala.

Quite a number of writers have classed the avocado as a gamble. It certainly was in the beginning, but there are now enough proven varieties on the market to put it on a par with any other horticultural business. If the pioneers had had the information before them that circular No. 1 issued by the Association now gives, it would have saved them many a dollar. There may be several varieties named in this circular that will have to give way to new and better varieties, but in the writer's opinion the Sharpless and Fuerte will always remain on the standard list.

Growers selecting varieties to plant should be governed by the locality they are living in. Where they have killing frost it is a loss of time and expense to plant the tender kind, unless they are prepared to protect them for the first two or three years. It is also just as important to know that the nursery stock you are buying has been budded from good bearing trees as it is to select the variety, and I know of no better way, in making your selection, than to buy of nurserymen who keep a performance record of the stock they are budding, which shows the row, number of tree, and in large groves the block, the buds are taken from. The Bureau of Plant Industry of the Department of Agriculture has

men in the field who keep a check on all performance record groves, which gives the buyer that additional protection.