

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON REGISTRATION AND CLASSIFICATION OF VARIETIES

Many new varieties, both from seedlings and imported buds, have come into bearing in California during the past year. The Committee, since the last annual meeting of the Association, has been active every month, and usually many times in the month, in visiting all such trees of which we could learn and sampling the fruit when it was in season and available; and also in striving to obtain the latest information and knowledge of the older kinds, which have been recommended by the Association for commercial planting.

Of the twenty-four best varieties from the highlands of Guatemala, selected and introduced into the United States by Mr. Wilson Popenoe, Agricultural Explorer of the United States Department of Agriculture, two have, during the past year, come into bearing in Florida, with a few fruit, the Nimlioh and the Panchoy, enough to prove their identity with the parent tree, hardly more, but enough to permit the Department to release the buds for general distribution, which they do not as yet permit except for these two varieties. All are being tested experimentally in California, among them we expect to find some of great value to us here and a number of them are setting fruit to mature during the coming season.

The list of eight varieties recommended for commercial planting, issued on October 25, 1917, as Circular No. 1 of the California Avocado Association, embodied the results and conclusions reached after a careful study of the different avocado varieties fruiting in California, made by the Committee and by the Board of Directors of the Association.

In a new industry, and with our rapidly extending knowledge and experience, a critical examination of the list must be made at intervals. Most of our members feel that the time has come to utilize the knowledge and experience which has been obtained during the past three years, and to bring the recommendations of the Association into accord with the most advanced knowledge.

This Association occupies the position of guide and advisor to the men who come into our young industry and plant avocado orchards—with few, or no exceptions, they will want rapid returns on their investments, with as little hindrance and unexpected expense as possible while awaiting crops. We must consider their interests and, as a matter of justice to them, we find the Taft, the Lyon and the Blakeman varieties should be dropped from the list of varieties recommended for commercial planting, which we do with regret, because the Taft fruit is very fine, one of the very best, and the tree itself beautiful, and one, that when it finally does come into bearing, will compensate those willing to wait a long time for returns; but it is longer in coming into bearing than the others that have been recommended and more susceptible to frost injury. It is no longer commercially planted. The Lyon is also a good fruit and the tree remarkably precocious and prolific and best adapted for interplanting, by reason of its slender shape, but it has

proved too generally weak and hard to raise; many trees in many plantings have died and a decay has developed in some of the fruit while still on the tree. We find this has occurred even in the parent tree. Fortunately, these defects do not interfere with the continuance of good prices for the sound fruit from the good crops being given by the good trees, nor do they interfere with planting of the trees by those willing to take the risks involved.

The Blakeman is one of the hardier varieties, with fruit of desirable size and quality, weight about one pound, color, glossy green, and seed comparatively small. Some three-year-old trees are bearing well and the parent tree is a good and regular bearer. The growth of the tree is too spreading and needs pruning when young to produce a compact and proper shape in the older tree. What we lack with this variety is experience with the young budded trees. It has been very limited and we feel that until we have more the variety should not be continued on the list.

Of the three races of avocado, we know the West Indian to be the most tropical, too tender for California and generally inferior in quality to the Guatemalan, which comes from high altitudes in Guatemala and Mexico and finds itself at home in our orchards wherever lemons will do well and be safe to plant. The fruits of the Guatemalan race so surpass the third race—the Mexican—in size, beauty, thickness of skin, freedom from fiber and good shipping qualities, that we have been led to recommend them alone for commercial planting to the exclusion of the Mexican type, which has a distinctive flavor of its own and is more hardy, standing with very many kinds, as much cold as an orange, with some seedlings even more. The usual faults with the Mexican type, besides the thin skin and very small size, are presence of fibre, of anise taste and of loose seed in the seed cavity.

It has been well understood that it was only a question of time before we would find examples of the Mexican type worthy to be recommended for planting, and now we discover we have already in the Puebla a very high-grade Mexican, which Mr. Wilson Popenoe, after a careful study of the original tree, states positively to be a true Mexican, and not a cross or hybrid, as we supposed. If we will accept his classification, and he is the one best qualified to know, we have already an excellent variety, with its fine distinctive flavor, in our recommended table to which we will, eventually, from time to time, find others to add. The Fuerte also, while predominantly Guatemalan, shows evidence of some Mexican blood.

In the table which follows the names are placed, not according to merit, but in the order in which the fruit begins to ripen, following the calendar year and using Los Angeles as a center. The ripening periods vary in different years and in different localities. In San Diego and vicinity they are earlier than those given in the table. Last season in that district Pueblas matured from October 7th to December 24th, Dickinsons from March 28th to June 7th:

LIST OF RECOMMENDED AVOCADO VARIETIES WITH BRIEF DESCRIPTIONS

Varieties	Season Dates, Inclusive	Wt. of Fruit in Ounces	Wt. of Seed in Ounces	Shape of Fruit	Color of Mature Fruits
Fuerte.....	Jan. to April	10 to 16	1½ to 3	Pyriform	Dull Green
Spinks.....	March to Oct.	16 to 20	2 to 3½	Obovate to pyriform	Purplish Black
Dickinson.....	May to Sept.	14 to 20	1½ to 2½	Obovate to pyriform	Dark Purple
Sharpless.....	Sept. to Jan.	16 to 20	2 to 3	Pyriform	Dark Purple
Puebla.....	Nov. to Jan.	6 to 14	1½ to 2½	Pyriform	Dark Purple

The Fuerte is one of the hardier varieties on the list, one of the most vigorous growing trees, an early and productive bearer, with fruit of the highest quality ripening at a very desirable period, but with a greater variation on the same tree in size and shape of fruit than usual, and with some coming too small.

The Spinks is also a strong growing tree. The large fruit is noted for its handsome appearance and has a long ripening period lasting from early in the year until October. Some fruit tested in October by Mr. Wilson Popenoe was pronounced, in a letter which he wrote, equal in flavor to the best he had found in Guatemala. The Committee was also greatly pleased with fruit tested that month, finding it of the highest character, but found some tested early in the season, though well colored and of good flavor, far from equal to the late fruit. The seed of this variety averages large in proportion to the flesh.

The budded trees of the Dickinson are proving better than the parent, both in tree and fruit. An outstanding feature of this fruit is its notably rough, warty skin, which becomes a glossy, handsome purple and identifies the variety. The quality is good and it comes in a period of its own—in the summer.

The Sharpless is well known for its handsome, large fruit, comparatively small seed, high quality and very desirable ripening period of fall and early winter. It requires about a year and a half from the blossom to maturity of the fruit.

The Puebla tree is one of the best types of the avocado, sturdy, hardy, compact, precocious and productive. The glossy, handsome, pear-shaped, purple fruit matures at a good season, but is smaller and with thinner skin than the others on the recommended list. The period required from the blossom to the maturity of the fruit is the shortest of any kind on the list, requiring about eight months, and the seed is of medium size.

NEW VARIETIES

The Queen and Dickey A are the leaders among the new varieties, but we have only one season's fruit from which, to test the first and a limited experience with young budded trees of each kind.

The Queen is rich in flavor, excellent in quality and notable in beauty of appearance of the flesh when cut. The tree is of a somewhat spreading growth. The ripening period is early summer; the seed medium to small for the large fruit, color dark red to dark purple; shape pyriform, slightly corrugated; skin thick, granular and brittle. Flesh, rich clear yellow, changing to beautiful dark green next to skin; and with no fiber.

The Dickey A is a spring fruit, it is hardy, promises well in prolificness, and the quality of

the fruit is extremely good. The weight, 12 to 18 ounces; seed very small, 1 1/2 to 2 ounces; color, dark red to purple.

There are also a number of varieties of merit among those tested since our last annual meeting. The notes taken about them have been filed with the Secretary and are open for inspection. Future letters for the Committee, or samples by Parcels Post of fruit for testing, should be sent to the Chairman at Upland.

Chas. D. Adams, Chairman,
T. U. Barber,
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Committee.