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NOTES ON AVOCADO VARIETIES

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Monrovia, California, April 18, 1928.

Dr. J. Eliot Coit, *Chairman,*

Varieties Committee,

California Avocado Association,

535 Prescott St., Pasadena, Calif.

Dear Dr. Coit:

Responding to your circular letter of the 15th ult, asking for views on behavior of all the avocado varieties, at date, I beg to report:

Fuerte: Still stands first in the favor of both the public, and the propagator. Seems to incline to a heavy crop and light crop in alternate years. Bears fruit all over, top and bottom, outside and inside. Fruit setting well this year. For several years have noticed some fruits develop black spots, or black, or burned ends. Doesn't seem to injure the fruit, unless left too long. One of its good characteristics is that the inside will be good even after the outside takes on a disreputable look.

Puebla: Heavy and light crops in alternate years. Always welcomed at the holiday times, and will be until something better takes its place, for about half the crop generally drops prematurely, slightly colored about the stem end, and skin curled off from the stem; sometimes at both ends.

Dorothea: Hasn't proven satisfactory, as a fruit. Cannot recommend it.

Benik: A good fruit. Late spring and early summer. Alternate heavy and light crops.

Mayapan: A "continuous performance" in fruiting but is so upright in growth, it breaks itself to pieces several times a year, from weight of fruit. No fruit ever blows off in the wind, but the weight of fruit breaks the tree, even after they have been "thinned". Of late fruits show too much short fibres in the blossom end. Otherwise it is a splendid fruit.

Queen: A grand fruit: pleases everyone who ever cuts in under its rough exterior, and beholds its beautiful interior. Tree very irregular in its growth, and prolific in sucker growth. Sets a fruit for every bloom, which fall not long after setting, leaving very little fruit to mature. For past several years they seem to be holding more fruits, and this year, they all had fairly good crops, of large fruits, but the most of them came off in two windstorms, this past winter. All orchards should have the Queen.

Linda: Very irregular growth of tree. Some trees bear regularly, others alternate years.

Fine large fruits and generally liked where extra large fruits are desired. As crops increase, the fruits decrease in size. Some fruits get black, and decay on blossom end.

Knight: Upright tree, beautiful foliage, and a fine fruit in every way, excepting the fatal blast which attacks from the blossom end.

Rey: Flesh of the fruit is good, but the abnormal size of the seed condemns it. Rey tree top-worked to Murrieta Green gives satisfactory results.

Taft: In this district it seems to be a hopeless case. After many years, it came into bearing, but we find that in the foothill districts, the fruits develop the fatal blast on blossom end, and while crops have been fairly good, for several years, the fruits were ruined before they ripened. We are informed that this trouble comes from certain oaks on the foothills. Taft fruits in the lowlands, and near the ocean, seem to retain their clean green exterior. For several years have been working over fifty Taft trees to Fuerte, and they are doing well, both as to tree and fruiting.

Dickey: Good winter, or early spring variety. Regular and heavy bearer. Considerable portion of the crop will blacken at blossom end and drop prematurely, notwithstanding which, though, a satisfactorily sized crop will be gathered each year.

Meserve: Unsatisfactory both in fruit and in fruiting. Am working over to other varieties.

Murrieta Green: Splendid fruit. Late spring and summer. Long season. Seed rather large. Green color. Am top-working all Rey trees to Murrieta Green; results as to growth and fruiting highly satisfactory.

Murrieta Two Pound: Great trees and grand fruits, if fruits can be kept on until season. They set heavily, but drop ditto. Green color.

Murrieta Purple, or Colorado: A fine spring fruit. Regular bearer, but much of the fruits crack, and start decay, and drop, prematurely. Brownish purple.

Glower: Green colored fruit; average pound, seed rather large, clean flesh, spring fruit, quality improves each year. Follows the Fuerte.

Miller: One of the best, theoretically, but its many years of uncertainty have gotten it into the discard.

Presidente: Good fruit, average pound, green color, seed rather large, and sometimes noticeable fibre.

Walker: Undesirable fruit, and the trees have, so far, utterly foiled years of effort to metamorphose them into anything else. Green color.

Blakeman: This has not fulfilled expectations, and is being worked over to other varieties.

Challenge: Same as the next one above.

Dickinson. Doesn't do well in this district, and has been worked over to Fuerte, leaving a Dickinson branch, with good results.

Montezuma: Fine large, green winter fruit, but a shy bearer. Tree very irregular in growth.

El Perfecto: Weak, watery fruit. Have worked tree over to other variety.

Dickey A: Good early spring fruit, brownish purple, seed small, clean flesh, good flavor, not a heavy bearer.

Kanola: Round, very dark color, medium seed, flesh pale yellow, flavor good, average pound; skin thick and granular, season late winter.

Nimlioh: This tree fruited once, but never again.

Cantel: Same may be said of this as of the preceding one.

Cabnal: A fine, large, almost round, green, summer fruit, yellow, clean flesh, and finest flavor, seed medium to small. Crops alternate years. Some fruits develop a black spot and drop prematurely.

Panchoy: A splendid, two pound, green colored fruit. Heavy oval, even sized, no small fruits, very thick skin, small seed, yellow, clean, rich, dry flesh, heavy fruiter, holds in the wind. BUT, for past two years fruit has developed black end and dropped prematurely. Its ordinary season is late summer and fall of the next year. Will hang some fruits until Christmas. Am holding Panchoy under observation.

Pankay: Elongated, irregular shaped fruit, shell-like skin, fair flavor, but coarse grained flesh. Undesirable, and will work over to something else.

Ishim: Profuse growing tree. Purple, irregular shaped fruit, mostly bottle necked to pear shape, late winter, and early spring. Medium seed, fair flavor. Not a particularly desirable variety.

Sharpless: One of the finest. Tree apt to break with weight of fruit, by reason of its irregular growth. Formerly a regular bearer, but for some years only every other year, and considerable of the fruits discolor and drop prematurely.

Lyon: The counter-balancing pros and cons concerning this well known and much discussed variety, have been broadcasted, and it is still on the air.

Spinks: Same may be said of this plenteous variety.

El On: Same may be said of this as of the Sharpless.

El Grande: It fruited once, but never again. Am working it over.

Ward: Beautiful tree, heavy fruiter, season best time of the year, Christmas, but after years of trial, its fruit is still unsatisfactory.

Tiger: Upright growing tree, attractive, dark, almost black, heavy pear-shaped fruit, very warty, but shiny skin, seed rather large, flesh pale to white, flavor mild. Not needed commercially.

Dutton: Rapid growing tree, early bearer, large, attractive, almost black fruit, very warty and glossy, desirable season, late winter, fine flesh and flavor. I find that it must be picked before fully colored, and eaten before getting ordinarily soft. Otherwise it develops decay on blossom end into the seed, or will discolor around the seed.

Manik: Irregular, shell-like skin, coarse flesh. Will work over.

Tumin: Has never fruited.

Lamat: Rather diffuse growing, fruit fair.

Prince: Upright grower. Never fruited, but probably will this year.

Thompson: Handsome tree. Not yet fruited.

Stephens: Handsome tree. Not yet fruited.

Dr. Weldon: Handsome tree. Fruited once, never again.

Ingersoll: Upright tree. Setting fruit heavily.

Nabal: Have only part of a tree, a couple of buds having been put on to a fairly well grown seedling tree, when we got the original budwood from the Government in 1918. It was practically forgotten, and didn't fruit until last year, since which time budwood hunters have kept it denuded of eyes, so that I haven't yet gotten any for myself. I hope to have more, for it is a handsome fruit externally, and very pleasing internally, and altogether a desirable fruit. Late summer.

Itzamna: Another splendid variety, average pound, green color, looks much like a large Lyon fruit, smooth, clean, yellow flesh, flavor fine, seed under medium, late summer, fruit last year held into October. First fruiting last year was from a top-work then only three and half years old. 80 fruits. This is another of Wilson Popenoe's varieties to be proud of. Two trees were top-worked, but one turned out to be a heavy fruiter of some other good variety which is under observation. Likewise this tree has been closely clipped for budwood, so that I haven't yet gotten any for myself. But hope to have a number of top-works of Itzamna. Probably nine people out of ten carelessly call this "Examiner". Wilson Popenoe said he retained the name, "Itzamna", which the natives had given it, in Guatemala, in honor of the chief god of their Mayan religion. So they must have esteemed it highly.

Tamayo: A bush-like growing tree. Has bloomed twice, but never fruited *Chota:* Another bush-like growing tree. Bloomed twice, and setting fruit this year.

Capac: Very tall slim tree. Has bloomed twice. Is setting fruit heavily this year.

Egas: Hasn't bloomed.

Carchi: Died.

Columbian: Hasn't bloomed.

Am working over practically all the Mexican varieties, excepting a few good trees of Harman, Northrop, and several seedlings, the eating qualities of which are excellent.

I have numerous seedlings fruiting, and which give promise of merit, but will postpone comment for another time.

Truly yours,

Thos. H. Shenden