

## **Avocados in Palestine**

GOVERNMENT OF PALESTINE

Department of Agriculture & Fisheries

Jerusalem, Palestine, 3rd August, 1936

Dear Dr. Coit:

I beg to acknowledge receipt of your letter of the 19th June, 1936, including the 1935 yearbook of the California Avocado Association for which I thank you.

Notwithstanding the great energy that a number of growers and horticulturists have shown in the extension of avocado growing in Palestine, very little progress is to be recorded in this culture since 1933. The most limiting factor to its development is the fact that most budded varieties are shy bearers. It is not the lack of knowledge of cross pollination nor the need of interplanting of varieties that are the causes for this failure, but is mainly due to local climatic conditions that prevail during the flowering season.

During the months of March, April and May, dry and desiccating winds blow over the country. These winds draw away from the plants all the available moisture, thus scorching leaves and causing the flowers or newly set fruit to drop. This phenomenon is very common in non-irrigated orchards or in groves under irregular irrigation, but even in well irrigated orchards some trees suffer more than others, and the same kind of tree or variety budded on different stocks is affected in varying degrees. Stocks having very active root system are able to supply the top (branching system) with sufficient water and withstand the effects of these winds better than those having slow and non-active roots. Furthermore, some of these active seedlings if left un-budded are less affected than when budded or grafted on. This is presumably due to lack of affinity.

### **HOT WINDS MAJOR OBSTACLE**

The detrimental effects of "Khamsins" (local name of the hot, eastern winds) are very marked in avocados. Avocado seedlings seem to be able to withstand Khamsins to a certain extent; but budded trees show far less resistance and are liable to a higher drop of the fruit and to more serious scorching of the leaves.

The subject of stocks is at present being studied in order to ascertain which seedlings withstand Khamsins best and which budded varieties give the best results under local conditions.

The 1936 avocado crop is very satisfactory and fine fruits of Duke, Northop, Fuerte, Dickinson, Puebla, Taft and Collinson may be expected as the Khamsins that prevailed during the spring were very short and scarce. Seedling trees are bearing a very heavy crop.

Small scale storage experiments carried out with a few fruits of Northop, Fuerte, Puebla Dickinson, Taft, and Collinson showed that all, with the exception of Northop, keep and ripen well in ordinary storage and still better in cold storage.

Very truly yours,

A. J. S. Senior Horticultural Officer.