

"Unusual" Weather in 1939

While avocado growers are prone to boast about the fine quality of normal California weather, they have to admit that occasionally very "unusual" weather occurs. The year 1939 was outstanding in that three different weather records were broken.

During the week of February 13, a very severe north wind swept the southern part of the state and caused widespread damage to buildings, trees, and crops. A sizable part of the unharvested avocados were blown from the trees, the immature summer varieties being a total loss. In addition there was much uprooting and breakage of trees, and fruit not actually blown off was, in most cases, badly wind scarred.

The spring and summer were exceptionally cool and late, there being no hot spells until September. From the 15th to the 23rd of September occurred a hot spell of longest duration and highest temperatures on record. Reversing the usual condition of heat in the interior and coolness along the coast, temperatures on this occasion were highest on the coast, reaching a maximum of 105 degrees at Long Beach and Santa Monica and above 105 at Los Angeles for eight consecutive days.

At the close of this period an unforecasted tropical storm came in from the southwest with high winds and heavy rains drenching the state. Ordinarily only occasional light showers are expected in October and good rains are looked for in November. This rain on September 24th and 25th gave from 1½ inches in San Diego to 5½ inches in Los Angeles, and as much as 10 inches in the mountains. Never before has such a heavy rainfall been recorded so early in the season. While much damage was done to some crops such as beans and hay, the avocado growers were saved the cost of one full irrigation.

—J. E. C.