

## The Avocado in South Africa

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The early introductions into the Union of South Africa consisted of West Indian seedlings. Their introductions were followed during the last 20 years by the importation of budlings of the most promising varieties of the three horticultural races. At present West Indian fruits, mainly from Natal where many thousands of trees are still to be found, predominate on the South African markets during their relatively short period of harvest. Established orchards of superior varieties in the Eastern and Northeastern Transvaal and to a lesser extent, in the western Transvaal and eastern Cape Province, are estimated by the author to consist of over 25,000 trees.

With favorable factors such as satisfactory tree performance, the improved varieties available and improved methods of propagation, it is felt that the industry will expand considerably in the future. However, the present demand for the fruit is well met, except during the spring to midsummer when exceptionally high prices are obtained.

During the last few years many varieties have been imported by the Subtropical Horticultural Research Station at Nelspruit in the eastern Transvaal, where they are at present being tested. In addition several varieties and some promising West Indian seedlings already growing in the country have been included in the Station's avocado variety collection listed below:

Anaheim	Gottfried	Nabal
Benik	Itzamna	Pollock
Benedict	Jessie Thompson	Puebla
Booth	Kashlan	Queen
Carton	Leucadia	Ryan
Collinson	Linda	Simmonds
Carlsbad	Lula	Sinaloa
Coban	Lyon	Thompson
Duke	Mayapan	Tiger
Dickey A	McDonald	Topa Topa
Dickinson	Mexicola	Trapp
Eagle Rock	Mexican seedlings (stock)	Ward
Edranol	Miller	
Fuerte	Murietta 2 lb.	

Though local experience is still limited valuable information has already been gained in connection with many varieties grown experimentally and on a commercial scale. In the light of this information the following varieties can be listed as some of the promising

ones recommended for trial and commercial plantings in South Africa:

**Early Season Varieties:** (Ripening February to May) Ward, Duke, Carton, Puebla and certain selected West Indian types.

**Mid Season Varieties** (Ripening from June to September): Fuerte, Dickinson, Sharpless, Thompson.

**Late Season Varieties:** (Ripening from October to December): Mayapan, Nabal, Collinson, Itzamna.

In general, the South African consumer, being used to the low oil content of the West Indian race, dislikes the high oil content in fruit of the Mexican and Guatemalan races.

Practically the whole South African avocado crop is consumed locally, but in view of the expected increased production, it may soon become necessary to export a portion of the crop.