

Annual Tree Production Record Plan

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La Habra

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The biggest problem of the avocado growers today is that of consistent heavy production per acre. The few growers who are getting this production are making very handsome returns from their investment. The bulk of the industry however does not enjoy this kind of production and is not making a reasonable profit from its groves.

This problem is a variety problem, as we have always had on the one hand heavy producing varieties, unfortunately of poor quality fruit; and on the other hand excellent fruits like the Fuerte but erratic in production. The Variety Committee's problem has been to find trees that combine these characteristics. You have just heard the report of the Variety Committee ably headed by Carter Barrett. To me this year's report is of great importance and I firmly believe that from the testing of these new winter seedlings (from all sources) will come the solution to better production of Fuerte type fruits. From my position as an active member of the Variety Committee, I have watched the development of this vital work which I fully expect to place this industry on a sound financial basis.

A few years from now this committee will undoubtedly have definite recommendations to make. Are we growers going to be in a position to make immediate use of this vital information? It is not desirable to arbitrarily top work all our trees at once as this would put us out of production for several years. The intelligent approach to this question would be to top work part at a time beginning with our poorest producing trees that are healthy and vigorous growers. This makes it necessary that we have at least three years records of production on each of our trees.

Few of us can safely leave this to memory. This means annual tree records as the tool to build ever increasing production.

Your Board of Directors proposes to furnish as a service to its members either free of charge or at a nominal expense tree record forms. This will encourage growers to start keeping these records and will serve to standardize records so that they may easily be compared among growers and assist in compiling industry statistics.

I have here today a limited number of these proposed record forms mimeographed. They will be distributed as samples. If there is sufficient interest they will be printed and made available at a later date.

Some of you no doubt have been keeping records in the past. Possibly by a system of tree tags. In this case I would suggest that you copy this information onto these new forms so you will have it available for study in the house. Also tree tags are subject to

accidental loss or illegibility due to weather. Personally I prefer to post my records direct to my book record and carry this record into the orchard when desired. This is a matter of individual choice.

These records may be kept as actual fruit count as picked, as boxes and fractions of boxes as picked, or by crop estimate. This latter is the simplest but not as accurate or desirable as the other methods. For the last four seasons I have been recording my picks by trees in boxes and fractions of boxes and have found it very satisfactory. I would recommend this method. It has not materially increased my picking cost. It is very desirable that notes also be taken of tree size and condition along with production figures. This can be done by suitable abbreviations or simple code.

USE OF FORMS

The form I have here today is 8½ inches by 11 inches and will fit into a standard three ring binder when punched. These binders may be purchased at any ten cent store and are the same as used by our high schools. This ruled form has provisions for ten years records and spaces for twenty trees to the page. The tree space rulings are purposely wide permitting two lines of writing allowing for liberal amount of information, The first column on the left is for the tree number. The next is for variety and age. The third is headed "Notes" and may be used when the tree is top worked or for remarks on tree size and condition. The next ten columns are for the yearly tree yield. Here it is also possible to record annually tree condition by a simple code as there is ample room due to the double spacing.

Although this form is based on the practical experience of several growers it may be possible to improve it and I would welcome any suggestions.

In conclusion I would like to again emphasize the importance of tree records. Each tree is a unit of our production and only when a substantial majority of these units are profitable will our orchards be profitable. Unit records are indispensable to any successful business.