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Report of Subtropical Fruit Committee

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Chairman

Since the report of your committee last year, there have been only three new registrations of subtropical fruits. Having so few newly registered fruits color pictures will not be shown until next year when we should have a sufficient number to make it worthwhile.

Registration No. 15 is the Carter Cherimoya which was registered by James Macpherson of Encinitas. This fruit is large, smooth, very high quality, and a relatively reliable bearer.

Another registration was the May Sapote which is a fruit of very high quality, from 7 to 12 ounces, yellow-green in color, 25 percent sugar, and pleasing taste. It is a very reliable bearer and, like the Suebelle, has a tendency to produce fruit throughout the entire year. This fruit was registered by Mrs. L. S. Whitmoyer of San Diego.

Our last registration is the Macpherson Mango. It is a seedling developed and registered by Captain L. L. Bucklew of Encinitas. It is reported to be an Indian variety but its parentage is unknown, as seeds were shipped to Captain Bucklew from several trees. This tree has borne quite heavily. The fruit is of high quality with 19½ per cent sugar, and weighing 6 to 8 ounces. It is an attractive yellow-green with an orange-red blush. It seems to be better adapted to our south coastal area than most of the standard varieties.

On February 1st of this year the Board of Directors of the California Avocado Society passed a motion authorizing our committee to change the name of the Riverside guava to the Webber. This is the finest of the guavas developed by the late Dr. H. J. Webber, who contributed so much to our subtropical horticulture.

The committee deems it advisable at this time to make a general appraisal of the subtropical fruit industry in southern California. Our subtropical fruits should be appraised for the following possibilities: (1) Fresh fruit grown commercially; (2) Fruit for preserving and processing; (3) As home fruits for back yard plantings; (4) Plants for their ornamental value. In many cases there are certain varieties particularly suited to each of the above purposes and only those varieties best suited should be planted. Indiscriminate planting without proper knowledge of suitable varieties is apt to lead to disappointments and failure. However, this in no way should discourage the planting of seed and seedlings, for only in this way are new varieties developed.

Any new fruit industry requires many years to become established on a commercial basis. The avocado had been in California about 70 years before it was generally accepted by the public and considered as grown on a sound commercial basis. This will probably be true to some extent with our other subtropical fruits and many of them will never be of much value from the commercial standpoint. Most of them, however, have a very definite place in our horticultural program and their propagation should be encouraged.

Loquat. The loquat has been an important economic fruit in the Orient since the Eighteenth Century and has become established in this country as a commercial fruit, particularly in our local markets. There is now a considerable acreage devoted to the production of loquats. Its chief value seems to lie in the fact that it is one of the first fresh fruits on the market in the spring and reaches the public when they are hungry for fresh fruit. The loquat has possibilities for canning and preserving and is a tree that should be included in the larger home orchards. Some experimental work should be done to develop larger fruit with smaller seeds. A single seed variety has already been developed, and as the quality of this fruit is improved, its popularity should increase.

Feijoa. The feijoa has not yet proved of much commercial value, but it is useful in landscaping for its decorative gray foliage and its exotic flowers and serves a double purpose as a food plant. The fruit is delectable when used just as it drops from the plant and when eaten at this time is extremely refreshing. The petals of the flowers may be used as a flavorful and delightful garnish on early summer salads. The petals may be

removed without injuring the fruit set. The Feijoa is said to have medicinal value as a mild cathartic and should be included in every home garden, as it does not take up a great deal of space.

Cherimoya. The cherimoya has proven itself to have commercial possibilities. There is some demand for it in stores handling exotic foods and also to some extent in health food stores. The demand for this fruit should be greatly increased with the development of air transportation. Many people who have lived in the tropics have developed a taste for cherimoyas and are glad to have an opportunity to purchase them. More experimental work should be done on this fruit to develop varieties with reliable bearing habits. It is quite sensitive to cold and should only be planted in the more protected locations.

Macadamia Nuts. There are now several small plantings of the Macadamia nut in southern California. The delicious flavor and high nutritional character of the nut has given it considerable popularity. It has been grown on a commercial basis in Australia and the Hawaiian Islands for many years. This plant seems to offer considerable commercial possibilities in southern California, as it can apparently be grown successfully in the avocado belt on soils which are not suited to the growing of avocados. When extensive plantings are made, proper facilities should be developed for processing. Processing usually consists of husking, drying, cracking, grading, dehydrating, cooking, salting, and proper storage. Macadamia is a very ornamental tree and has a definite place as such in our landscapes. The nuts are very edible without the elaborate processing customary when they are packed for commercial use. Therefore, a back yard tree will provide a great deal of beauty as well as an interesting food.

There exist in Hawaii two distinct types of macadamia, the rough-shell (**Macadamia ternifolia**) and the smooth-shell (**Macadamia ternifolia** var. **integrifolia**). The industry in Hawaii is based on the smooth-shell type which makes up the entire commercial pack, except for small exports of nuts in the shell. This type is more or less ever-bearing and for that reason is considered desirable for back yard plantings. Most of our available trees are seedlings. However, grafted trees are usually used for commercial production in Australia and Hawaii.

The trees usually begin to bear in 5 to 8 years from time of planting. They are healthy, vigorous, and are easily grown in most sections of southern California. There is considerable variation in their ability to withstand frost. Macadamia is a beautiful ornamental tree and when you consider its crop of delicious nuts, it becomes doubly valuable. This tree is worthy of our attention and experimental work with it should be started as soon as possible.

White Sapote. The white sapote is another tree which has very distinct ornamental value as well as being one of our most delicious and promising subtropicals. It should be used more extensively as a back yard tree. It is at its best when properly matured on the tree and used in prime condition. It thrives on relatively poor soils. Its quality seems

to improve when given a minimum amount of water and fertilizer. There are varieties now available, such as the Suebelle, which bear fruit throughout the entire year. They supply to the home table a delicious fruit for salads, cocktails, or to be eaten out of hand. The sapote has considerable commercial possibilities, as it will no doubt be in great demand when it becomes better known, and air transportation should greatly extend its market. It is now found only in stores handling exotic foods and health food stores or in stores patronized extensively by the Mexican people, as they have, through many years of use, developed an appreciation for this fruit. Medicinal qualities which the sapote is said to have should be explored. It is a very delicious fruit when used as a conserve or preserved by other methods. It has about 25 per cent sugar. The sapote is a strong growing tree, considerably hardier than most of our other subtropical fruits. It usually starts bearing 3 or 4 years after planting. Most varieties are hardy down to about 20°.

African Carissa. The African carissa is a very ornamental shrub which, because of its sharp thorns, makes, an impenetrable hedge. It produces small attractive white Jasmine-like flowers which are very ornamental. The fruit from our better plants is delicious when made into a sauce and as such it rivals the cranberry. This plant has a definite place in our southern California horticulture.

Guava. The tropical guava has proved to be extremely high in vitamin "C" and is used quite extensively in jellies and guava paste. More experimental work should be carried on with this fruit to develop the best means of utilizing its high vitamin "C" content.

Persimmon. There are two general types of persimmons, astringent and non-astringent. Both have considerable possibilities as fresh fruits. The astringent persimmons have a higher sugar content and have continued to be the most popular. However, the non-astringent types are used extensively, as they are very decorative and impart a delicious flavor and interesting color to fruit salads. The astringent persimmon has good commercial possibilities for dehydration purposes. Dehydrated persimmons are delicious and compare favorably with other dried fruits.

Tuna (Prickly Pear Cactus Apples). This fruit is relished by people from the Mediterranean countries and is in particular demand by the Italian people living in the East. There is one large commercial planting of this fruit in San Diego county which seems to be sufficient to supply the present demand.

Cattley guava. There are two forms of the Cattley guava, commonly known as the strawberry guava. One is yellow fruited, the other a deep red. Both should be planted more extensively in back yards, as they are unexcelled for use in jellies and whips. There are several commercial plantings which seem to be sufficient to supply the present demand. Anyone planting this fruit on an extensive scale should be in a position

to make it into jelly and to market it in its preserved form, since the market for this fruit is quite limited and the fruits are perishable. Most all plants available of the Cattley guava are seedlings but they come very true from seed.

Passiflora (Purple passionfruit) has been grown extensively for the manufacture of fruit juices. It makes a delicious product and will no doubt, have a limited place as a commercial fruit in southern California. One or two plants do not take up a great deal of room and are very interesting and useful. Passiflora should be used more extensively for back yard planting. They make a good covering for fences. The passiflora is usually propagated by seed, as it, too, comes very true to form.

Mango. Captain L. L. Bucklew of Encinitas is exploring the possibilities of mango raising in southern California, and is now the outstanding authority in southern California on this fruit. He has developed one variety particularly which, in his opinion, has a great deal of merit.

There are a large number of other subtropical fruits which are being experimented with, but the committee has not registered them, either because they have not yet shown themselves adapted to our environment, or because they are not capable of being propagated vegetatively.

The success of our committee depends upon each one of you. Please send in your promising seedlings and give us a chance to consider them for registration. If they are accepted, the fee is only one dollar, and you may be making a valuable and lasting contribution to our southern California Horticulture. For instructions on registration, write to the Society headquarters in Los Angeles or contact any members of the Committee.

Bearing Papaya Orchard on Hoblitzelle Ranch, Mercedes, Texas, Solo Variety.