

## **Report of the Committee on Subtropical Fruit Varieties**

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The Subtropical Fruit Variety Committee was established within the California Avocado Society in 1941, because a considerable number of members were interested and enthusiastic about unusual fruits other than the avocado. The growing of strange and unique subtropical fruits is a natural avocation to be followed by the avocado grower, for many such plants can only be grown where the avocado succeeds. To promote further interest in the lesser known fruits, the committee developed a plan whereby new varieties of the several minor subtropical fruit plants could be formally registered and recognized by the Society. The primary purpose of this register of varieties and promising seedlings is to make these varieties known to those who may wish to try them in new areas on an experimental basis as dooryard or family orchard trees, or perhaps in some localities as small test plantings.

While avocado growing is doubtless the primary interest of most members of the Society, the potentialities of some subtropical fruits other than the avocado should not be overlooked. Such fruits as the cherimoya, macadamia or white sapote may possibly be excellent supplementary crops in the future, or may be the basis of small commercial enterprises. Moreover, the personal pleasure derived from the growing of rare or unusual fruits is an avocation worthy of promotion.

Because fruit industries are built primarily on or around good varieties, the first objective of those interested in the lesser known fruits should be to develop the best varieties possible. Hence, a pooling of our knowledge about these fruits is highly desirable. The fruit variety registry of this Society is one of the most effective means of making known good varieties or outstanding seedlings upon which further and wider testing should be done.

The work of the Subtropical Fruit Variety Committee was somewhat impeded during the war as the result of many other pressing duties of its members. The fine initial start which the work received under the guidance of Chairman Dean F. Palmer has carried the work on regardless of the many difficulties encountered. The ideals which the committee set up are high and the work done thus far has been good. During the five years of existence the committee has registered a total of 18 varieties and seedlings. These registrations are described and illustrated by photographs in various issues of the Society Yearbook, from 1940 to 1947.

Information about fruit varieties registered by the committee is available to anyone who is interested in fruits. It should be pointed out that only a few of the fruits, aside from the avocado and citrus, can be recommended for planting on an extensive scale in Southern California, at least with the varieties available at the present. Among the fruits

which we feel certain have commercial potentialities and which can be recommended for trial planting on a small scale are the cherimoya, macadamia and white sapote. Nearly all other fruits, such as the mango, litchi, papaya and other tender subtropicals, must await development or discovery of varieties better adapted to our climatic conditions and which will produce fruit of good quality.

### **The Cherimoya**

The cherimoya has been grown in California for more than seventy years. Commercial plantings have been ventured from time to time during the past two decades but few have been successful, in most instances, primarily because of irregular crops. Hand pollination has provided a method to insure more regular crops of better shaped and larger fruit. Increased market outlets are gradually developing as the fruit becomes more widely known.

The cherimoya as an industry is of potential, although at present minor, importance. The total acreage in Southern California is approximately 50 acres, besides which several thousands of trees are found in family orchards or as dooryard specimens. There are perhaps a dozen or more growers who produce and sell the fruit on a commercial scale. These producers are developing eastern markets as well as local outlets in the higher class and specialty food stores. One grower has shipped as much as 1,500 twelve-pound flats in a single season, besides the unpacked fruit which was marketed locally. There is a constant search for and need of new cherimoya varieties which will extend our present season of December to June. Also needed are varieties with better shipping and handling qualities and regular bearing behavior.

### **The Macadamia Nut**

Interest in the macadamia nut (Queensland or Australia nut) has been stimulated to a high degree within the past few years. This nut is now the basis of a rather well developed industry in Hawaii and it is the opinion of many that it may have some place of importance in California horticulture in the future.

The macadamia plant is well adapted to many parts of Southern California and is found primarily as an ornamental, although a few commercial plantings have been set out in recent years. Only seedlings have been grown up to the present because of the difficulty experienced in propagating the plant by grafting or budding. Rooted cuttings may prove to be a possible means of developing and propagating varieties of this plant. We have no named varieties of the macadamia in Southern California at present. Several fine old specimens are now under observation by members of the variety committee, and it is hoped that some of these specimens will be registered within the near future. The development of several named varieties in Hawaii has encouraged many people to try the plant here and to seek good quality fruit as a basis for development of the nut in this state.

The Subtropical Fruit Variety Committee urges that anyone who has specimens of subtropical fruiting plants which are of unusual size or which produce fruit of outstanding quality, call these plants to the attention of members of the committee, so that they can

be studied and observed and perhaps recommended for registration. The committee is especially interested to learn of the location of plants bearing good fruits of cherimoya, macadamia, white sapote, papaya, mango, Surinam cherry (*Eugenia uniflora*), kei-apple (*Dovyalis caffra*), Red Cattley guava (*Psidium cattleianum*), feijoa and African carissa (*Carissa grandiflora*).

The committee has two fruits pending registration at this time. One is a large fruited kei-apple (*Dovyalis caffra*), which is a plant little known though it has an interesting fruit which makes a good jelly and can be grown readily. The second probable registration is a large fruited macadamia nut of outstanding fruit size and good quality. It is hoped and urged that more registrations of such fruits as these be made in order that our little known fruits may become better known and that we can have the best varieties of these available for everyone.

It is desirable to periodically review some the fruit variety registrations in order to bring up to date the information concerning their behavior and qualities gained as they become more widely planted and as more experience is had concerning them. Hence the following remarks are brief statements presented to supplement descriptions which were made in the original registration data of the various fruits.

**Vinmar white sapote**—This variety seems to be a continuous bearer at Carlsbad where it has fruit and flowers at all times. Although the fruit may drop from the tree while still firm, it can be picked up and softened later. The fruit size is somewhat small.

**May white sapote**—This is a very promising white sapote with an everbearing habit and large crops. The fruit, somewhat larger than Suebelle, contains about 25 per cent sugar.

**Ott cherimoya**—This is still one of the best of the cherimoyas found in Southern California. It should be tried in other sections than La Habra, where it produces fruit of outstanding quality.

**Chaffey cherimoya**—This variety is a good bearer under the rather unfavorable conditions where it has been observed. The fruit is of excellent quality, both in flavor and in form. It is a smooth fruit which comes rather late in the season.

**Carter cherimoya**—This has been a good bearer of fine quality fruit in certain sections of San Diego County and should be given further trial in other sections. It is a shy bearer in the coastal area of Los Angeles County, but has not been tried in all sections. The fruit is late and has a tough smooth skin, which makes it desirable for handling and shipping.