

AVOCADOS IN BRAZIL

M. M. Winslow

*Senior Administrative Assistant, Citrus Experiment Station,
University of California, Riverside.*

The Florida varieties of avocados were introduced into Minas Gerais State, Brazil, around 1925 and later into the state of Sao Paulo and other states. The principal varieties now grown are the Collinson (which is the preferred variety), Winslow, Wagner, Fuchsia, Gottfried, Barker, and Linda. Many others are listed by the leading nursery in Sao Paulo. The Fuerte is grown very little since the people prefer a large fruit of low oil content. The Fuerte is an alternate bearer in Brazil.

While the Florida varieties were introduced rather recently, the West Indian race has been grown much longer. Seedling trees 30 to 50 years of age are found. The principal variety grown is the Waldin. The West Indian varieties are popular because of the low oil and rather sweet flavor. In Brazil the avocado is eaten as a dessert. The pulp is crushed with a fork or put through a blender and made into a paste. Sugar is added and then lemon juice. After cooling in the refrigerator it is eaten as we would eat any fruit sauce. Avocado paste is also popular in ice cream mix and milk shakes.

While there are some commercial orchards in Sao Paulo totaling around 250 acres, numerous small plantings of only 10 to 25 trees are common. The acreage is expanding as the fruit is well liked. The production is consumed locally and shipped to Rio de Janeiro City and Rio Grande do Sul State.

The area in the states of Sao Paulo and Minas Gerais where the avocado is grown is characterized by dry, cool winters and wet summers. The average rainfall is about 60 inches. The winter temperature does not fall below 32° F. Elevations range from 1000 to 3000 feet. Irrigation is not necessary nor practiced during the dry season.

Root rot occurs on wet soils so the avocado is planted in deep, well drained soils. It often follows land that previously grew coffee. Fruit scab occurs and is controlled with a Bordeaux spray.

The principal insect is a trunk borer in Sao Paulo State. A repellent of lime-sulfur as a paint is applied to the tree trunks.

These comments are based on conversations with Dr. Sylvio Moreira, Head of the Department of Horticulture, Institute Agronomico de Campinas, in Sao Paulo and Dalmo C. Giacometti, Instituto Agronomico, Belo Horizonte, State of Minas Gerais. These researchers recently spent some time at the University of California Citrus Experiment Station.