

BRINGING HOME THE BACON

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Picking avocados is like big game hunting. There's lots of looking before anything is found. Especially these past few years in Orange County.

The mighty Fuerte, king of varieties for to this many years is rapidly losing favor because of poor production. A vigorous, upright newcomer, the Bacon is challenging the Fuerte in the colder areas of this county. It's showing real promise.

The Bacon has many desirable characteristics. It tolerates more cold than most of the commercial varieties. Local growers feel it can be grown wherever Valencias are grown—provided expensive frost protection is not required.

Hot weather doesn't seem to bother this variety like it does more tender types. The 1955 heat wave (September temperatures reached 116°) barely wilted Bacon trees. Button fruit did fall. By comparison many varieties showered down fruit in all locations.

Windy weather — lots of it in Orange County — wastes energy on Bacons. Fruit hangs inside next to the trunk. Scars and drops are kept to a minimum.

In brief the Bacon is a thrifty, vigorous tree. It is a recommended experimental variety for the colder areas of the Orange County coastal plain. Already it shows promise in the Orange, Santa Ana, Tustin Districts. Of course it's proven at its home-site, Buena Park.



Bacon tree in La Habra grove following heat wave of September 1955.

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Fuerte in same grove. Note heat burn in top. Upright trees in background are Bacons.



Bacon tree growing at a Santa Ana Canyon ranch after severe windstorm, fall 1956.



Zutano tree at same orchard after same windstorm.

From the standpoint of production the Bacon stands head and shoulders above the Fuerte in colder areas. There is little doubt that it can be a successful replacement for Fuertes in the Valencia belt. Take the following records as an example. Fifteen-year-old Fuertes are being swamped by six-year-old Bacon grafts. During the 1956-57 season the Bacon shelled off 108 boxes per acre. The big, shady, lazy Fuertes strained to produce 24 boxes per acre.

If the Fuertes had been picked when the price hit 30 cents a pound it meant \$288 per acre. Spotting a 10 cent difference, Bacons at 20 cents, returns came to \$864 per acre. A neat \$576 advantage for the Bacon. Really bringing it home, isn't it?