

AVOCADO SITUATION IN SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY

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Avocados can be grown successfully in the hot interior region in the San Bernardino Valley. At the present time there are 97 bearing acres of avocados and 48 non-bearing acres in the county. Many varieties have been tried; however, the current recommendations for the Zutano and Bacon varieties seem to be the ones that are best for our county. There are a few plantings of the Covocado in the county, and some growers are considering adding more acreage of this variety. The reason for this interest is earliness of this variety, the favorable price that has been received for this variety during the past few years, and good yields. The variety is not recommended because of its low oil content; however, the variety is being planted. There are a few Hass trees planted in the Upland area that are doing very well. The acreage probably will always be very limited because of the susceptibility of the trees to the cold weather that we occasionally experience in this area and to the winds that we have nearly every year.

There are two variety test plots located in the county, one near Mentone and the other in Alta Loma. The promising varieties for this area are those that are early and have a fair production. More information is needed, however, before any of these varieties could be recommended. The acreage that could be planted to avocados in San Bernardino County could increase due to the removal of marginal citrus orchards along the foothills that are favorable for avocado growing. If more favorable varieties could be found, there probably would be a substantial increase in the avocado acreage in the county.

We have no known cases of avocado root rot in the county, and most of our avocado growers have no special cultural care for their avocados. They follow the same general care that is given to citrus in our county as regards to irrigation and fertilization. The growers have not been troubled with any of the avocado pests so far.

One of the problems that growers with a small acreage have is the lack of nearby marketing facilities in the county. This is particularly true at the beginning of the season when a grower needs to know how much oil content is in the fruit. Not being close to the large avocado districts in California, the growers in San Bernardino County are placed at a slight disadvantage when it comes to marketing and finding the oil content in their fruit easily. The success of the avocado growers in our county depends upon picking the fruit as early as possible in the fall before blemishes develop on the fruit, and before they have to compete with the Fuerte market. The growers in the county need an oil testing service in the county, and hope that one will be made available in the near future.