

The California State University at Fullerton Arboretum

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With the dedication taking place October, 1979, the California State University at Fullerton opened to the public a 25 acre arboretum made possible by a joint powers agreement between the California State Trustees and the City of Fullerton Redevelopment Agency. This facility will provide the public and the University community with educational and research opportunities for the study of plant and wildlife habitats, use of native California plants, and a variety of trees and plants from other regions of the world.

In addition to the shrubs and trees, a theme on the preservation of the area's historic past seems to prevail. A historical museum area has been established with the restored home and office of Dr. Clark, one of Fullerton's early physicians. The home was built in 1894 and has been furnished as near as possible to its original state. In addition to Dr. Clark's home, known now as Heritage House, a Victorian grape arbor, a restored windmill and tank house, and an authentic 1890 two-hole outhouse have been added to the site. As funds become available, a carriage house and tool shed will be provided. It is hoped that old horse-drawn equipment will be made available for display. Part of the educational program is to conduct tours of the faculty, particularly for school children whose only exposure to our past is through facilities of this nature.

Due to the historic nature of this project, it has provided an opportunity for the California Avocado Society to participate in recognizing the origins of the major avocado varieties that have made the avocado industry in California as well as throughout the world where avocados are commercially grown. Within a radius of a few miles of the arboretum, the first commercial Fuerte avocado planting was made in 1913, the original Hass tree was discovered growing in La Habra Heights, and the original Bacon tree in Buena Park. Space has been provided by the arboretum; and the three varieties—Fuerte, Bacon, and Hass—became candidates for planting in the historic tree area.

With the approval of the Board of Directors of the California Avocado Society, Mr. Jim Bacon and I proceeded to collect budwood from the original trees. We first visited the old planting made by Mr. John T. Whedon in Yorba Linda. These trees were propagated from budwood sent to the West India Gardens in Altadena from Atlixco, State of Puebla, Mexico, by Carl Schmidt. The trees were known as Number 15, later to be called "Fuerte" because they withstood the severe 1913 freeze.

As the avocado industry developed and we were sifting through many backyard seedlings, a tree planted by Mr. Rudolph Hass, of La Habra Heights, came to the attention of the industry. As a chance seedling planted in 1926 by Mr. Hass, its superior quality and production soon gained popularity; and Mr. Harold Brokaw secured the patent to grow and distribute the nursery trees.

Sometime after the 1948-49 freezes, another chance seedling came into prominence because of its frost tolerance. This tree is located on the Jim Bacon ranch in Buena Park.

The selected budwood was delivered to the Atkins Nursery, in Fallbrook. Oliver Atkins budded these three selected varieties onto Topa Topa rootstock. The budded trees were picked up in Fallbrook, and on May 21, 1980, were planted in the historical tree plot at California State University, Fullerton. There are five trees of each variety planted in the ground, and one tree of each variety is planted in a 15 gallon can, should one of the original five need to be replaced. As of October, 1980, all trees appeared to be doing well.

The avocado varieties mentioned are not the only contribution this area has made. The original Valencia Olinda nucellar seedling was found growing in the backyard of a lease house on the Olinda Oil Company Lease at the head of Carbon Canyon a few miles away. Trees of this Olinda bud were purchased from Mr. W. H. Brokaw's Nursery in Saticoy, and there are now eight trees planted in the area.

To complete this historic planting, we will be getting English walnut trees from the variety collection on the campus of the University of California, at Davis. These trees will be available in the spring of 1981. History records that the original Placentia Delight English walnut tree grew on the Wagner or Tuffry properties only a short distance away.