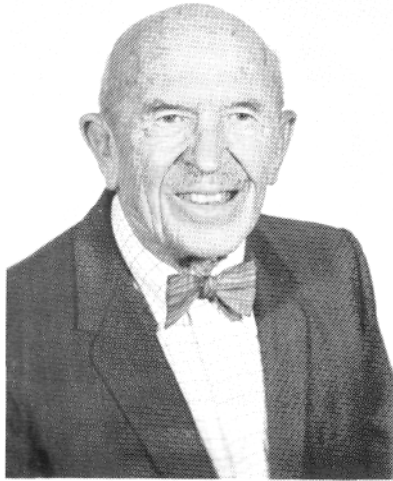


California Avocado Society - 1981 Awards of Honor



Randolph Matson

The sixty-seventh award of honor given by this Society since 1938 for outstanding meritorious service in behalf of the avocado industry was given in 1981 to Randolph Matson, of Vista, California.

"Randy" Matson was the first independent technician to provide an avocado root rot testing service for growers. He was a pioneer in this field. His concern, modesty, judgment, and accomplishments earned the respect of fellow growers and university research personnel, as well as of many others throughout the California avocado industry.

Randy Matson entered the avocado industry in 1942, when the Douglas Aircraft Company transferred him from California to its Oklahoma City plant, as Executive Engineer, and proceeds of the sale of his home in Sherman Oaks were invested in avocado land in Vista. A slump in the aircraft industry in 1948 prompted Mr. Matson and his wife to move, with their five children, to their avocado orchard.

Discovery a few years later that there were diseased trees in the orchard, together with a latent interest in biology, stimulated Mr. Matson to buy a microscope and to learn how to identify *Phytophthora cinnamomi*, the cause of avocado root rot. By 1954, with the help of Dr. George Zentmyer and others on the staff of the University of California at Riverside, he had become competent in testing for avocado root rot, and since then has provided testing and advice to northern San Diego County growers with root rot.

Among other accomplishments, Mr. Matson developed a pump run by water pressure to apply Vapam© to the barriers some growers were establishing to prevent spread of the root rot disease.

He has had as his main objective, over the years, the application of results of research by the University of California to the problems of the growers. Toward that objective, he has worked continuously with Dr. Zentmyer and his staff, and has participated in various field research projects. He is the author of a series of articles for *Avocado Grower* magazine, again toward his objective, and is a member of the Research Committee of the California Avocado Commission.

A special award of merit was presented, at the annual meeting in September, to a previous recipient of the award of honor, George A. Zentmyer. Dr. Zentmyer is only the third person in the sixty-seven year history of the Society to become entitled to wear the award of honor medal with leaf cluster appended. J. Eliot Coit and Marvin B. Rounds, both of whom received similar awards in 1956, were the other two persons so honored.

The record of George Zentmyer's contributions to the world-wide avocado industry is far too voluminous to attempt to recite in limited space. He is unquestionably the world's greatest authority on *Phytophthora cinnamomi*, and has made significant advances toward eventual control of the avocado root rot it causes. His work with other diseases of avocado has likewise been of importance to the avocado industry. Throughout his career at the University of California at Riverside, to the time of his retirement in 1981 (and, indeed, to the present), Dr. Zentmyer has communicated his knowledge to the industry through the pages of our Yearbooks.

To George Aubrey Zentmyer, avocado growers everywhere owe gratitude for his splendid efforts in their behalf.