

## Award of Honor 1987



Dr. Tom W. Embleton

### DR. TOM EMBLETON

*[Presentation of the 1987 Award of Honor was made by Past President of the California Avocado Society, Robert G. Platt]*

The California Avocado Society's 1987 Award of Honor is presented to Dr. Tom W. Embleton, a person most deserving of the award. Through his research, growers have a much better understanding of the requirements of avocado trees for nutrients, or fertilizers, needed for maximum production and tree health.

Tom was born in Oklahoma; but at an early age came, with his parents, to Tucson, Arizona, where he attended high school. In 1941, he graduated from the University of Arizona with a B.S. in Horticulture.

Following graduation, he took a position at the U.S.D.A. date gardens in Indio from 1941 to 1946, with four years of that period — 1942 to 1946 — in service as an officer with the U.S. Army in the European Theater during World War II.

In 1946, he went to Cornell University, in Ithaca, New York, for graduate study; and, in 1949, he received his Ph.D. in Pomology. After receiving his Ph.D., he took a position on the staff as a researcher at the Irrigation Experiment Station of Washington State University in Prosser. This lasted for eight months when, in May 1950, he was offered and accepted a position as Assistant Horticulturist at the Citrus Experiment Station, University of California, Riverside. He remained there, advancing in position to Horticulturist and Professor of Horticulture, until his retirement at the end of December, 1988.

In 1960, Tom was honored by being elected a Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, and in 1975, by being elected a Fellow of the American

Society for Horticultural Science. The major emphasis of Dr. Embleton's research has been in the area of the nutritional needs of citrus and avocados; and, in more recent years, the potential hazards of salinity build-up in ground water from fertilizer applications in orchards.

On avocado and citrus research, he has authored over 75 technical and over 85 semi-technical papers and has written over 44 mimeographed reports and abstracts. One of his early published reports, entitled "Avocado Fertilizer Experiments," appeared in the 1955 Yearbook of the California Avocado Society. He has published twelve other papers in the Society's Yearbooks.

His early avocado research was directed toward nitrogen application and use by the Fuerte, when the Fuerte was the predominant variety. He showed then that too much nitrogen reduced production — beautiful trees, but less fruit. As the variety picture changed, he directed his research toward the newer varieties — with much of it, naturally, to Hass.

If, as a grower, you have fertilized your avocado trees and have used leaf analysis to guide your fertilizer practices, you are indebted to Dr. Tom Embleton for developing and refining the leaf analysis standards to guide you in the application of what and how much fertilizer to use.

I'm sure that Tom would agree that getting sound, meaningful data from avocado trees is not the easiest thing to do. Their idiosyncrasies and variation of production make research field trials very difficult and time consuming. But Tom's persistence, patience, and ability have provided the industry with results and information that are very meaningful in avocado tree nutrition and production.

Tom and his wife, Lorraine, reside in Riverside. They have raised five sons: Harry (whom they lost in an automobile accident), Gary, Wayne, Terry, and Paul. I've lost track of how many grandchildren they have.

For his outstanding research, his dedication to finding answers to avocado tree nutrition questions, and his grower-usable results, the California Avocado Society is proud to present its Award of Honor to Dr Tom W. Embleton.