

Wild Mushrooms or Imagination

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When was the last time you spent some serious time in your avocado grove?

Late winter-early spring is my favorite time to walk on damp avocado leaves and soil, cutting limbs, harvesting, and contemplating future production and returns.

It was during one of our recent post-rain-soaked, clean-air mornings as I was grafting over Zutanos that it occurred to me that I should cut back all potential avocado pollinators! In addition, instead of experimenting with Dr. Carol Lovatt's bloom-timed foliar sprays of boron and low-biuret urea, I thought it better to abandon the plan in favor of attending to those trees absent of bloom!

Were the mushrooms I ate the night before wild, or was my vivid imagination warning me of imminent meltdown? The paradox of my call to eliminate pollinators is that I am a bona fide card-carrying member of "The Pollination Club." Our contention is that the presence of B-flower types in 'Hass' groves contributes positively to overall returns, even taking into account their competitive effect and reduction of total number of 'Hass' trees per acre. Am I renouncing my allegiance with "Club" colleagues in my call for pollinator assassination?

Not really.

Avocado bloom for '94 appears bountiful and widespread. Barring a spring heat wave or a violently windy or cold '95 winter, I estimate a 400 million-plus pound crop for 1994-95. You heard it here first (*gulp*). This estimate factors into account a light '94 crop year that resulted from a crop alternation pattern established from a heavy '93 crop year, and also factors in a decline in producing acreage from '93 to '95.

So, if one takes this projection stuff to the next higher rung, one may reach the same conclusions as mine: Reduce efforts to enhance crop production in the "on" years, and reserve crop-enhancement practices like limb girdling, bee-scent applications, etc. for years when industry production estimates are low.

