

California Avocado Society 1995 Yearbook 79: 6-7

Edward Frasier Frolich

1915-1996

The avocado world lost a friend and benefactor when Edward Frasier "Ted" Frolich died on January 22nd, 1996.

Ted was a true plantsman, devoted to his trade and sharing his knowledge and skills with many people throughout his life of 81 years. He joined the College of Agriculture at the University of California, Los Angeles, in 1936 as a research associate and plant propagator in the department of subtropical horticulture, where he remained until retirement in 1975. He had retained and operated a very successful nursery with his brother Mathew in Van Nuys where they produced many ornamental species for the wholesale trade. Working with the late Dr. F. F. Halma at UCLA on avocado rootstock investigations, Ted was the first to develop and demonstrate the feasibility of inducing roots on avocado stem pieces by the "etiolation technique." This method allowed the production of clonal rootstocks on a large scale to provide the basis of modern avocado industries throughout the world. The California Avocado Society presented its "Award of Honor" to Ted in 1971 for this and his many other contributions to our knowledge of the avocado. Ted also worked in cooperation with the late John Carpenter (pathologist, USDA) and with E.C. Calavan of UC/Riverside using grafting techniques to understand viroid detection and the behavior of the exocortis disease in citrus. The California citrus industry issued a special award to the trio in 1951 to recognize this important research.

Upon retirement, Ted devoted much energy and support to the Theodore Payne Foundation through service on the Advisory Council, as a life member, and in the propagation of native California plant species for distribution by the Foundation. He was also active in the International Plant Propagators Society.

Ted performed military service in the Philippines during World War II, and was the recipient of a silver star and purple heart medals.

A "gentleman in overalls" working in the greenhouses and in the fields at UCLA, Ted received visitors—growers, academics, and plant lovers from near and far throughout the world—who sought his cheerful and freely given consultation. Students and staff alike benefited from his wide experience and respected his critical evaluation of projects and experimental results of their investigations on all aspects of plant science. Ted wrote several articles on his investigations and co-authored many other papers with colleagues to enrich our horticultural literature.

While Ted has left to those who knew him personally, many wonderful individual memories, his more tangible contributions to the world are the myriad of avocado and other fruit trees and of countless precious and beautiful ornamental specimens which we enjoy today and which will persist for future generations. We are grateful to you, Ted Frolich, for your contributions to our lives.

—C. A. Schroeder