

## SECOND REPORT OF THE AVOCADO VARIETY COMMITTEE

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This, the second report of the Variety Committee, comes after a fairly successful season for the industry, and with an increased interest in varieties being shown. We have seven registered varieties, and a number of seedlings under observation.

The crop last season was not heavy, neither West Indians nor hybrids distinguishing themselves. To this the only notable exception was the Lula. A good Lula crop last year, with prospects for a good one this season, establishes this variety even more firmly as the leading winter avocado. When the faults of the Lula—its susceptibility to scab, its big seed, and the unfortunately tall habit of growth—are considered, we think it reasonable to hope that it will be supplanted by some equally good variety lacking these traits, but as yet that variety has not appeared.

The status of the other varieties has not changed greatly since our first report. The Trapp crop was a failure last year, and Trapp trees were badly injured by the cold this spring, so this variety is distinctly in ill favor. Fuchs has behaved similarly, and its popularity has not been enhanced thereby, Hickson suffered more than the average hybrid in the cold this spring, and it may be that its tenderness will prove a major drawback in all but the warmest locations.

Among the more promising new varieties, Hall and Herman have performed creditably and are being planted commercially in limited numbers. Both varieties bore well last year, and both have prospects of good crops this season. Hall withstood the cold almost as well as such varieties as Itzamna, while Herman seems comparable to the Booth varieties in hardiness.

**Registered varieties.** Seven varieties have been registered with the committee. Five of these are new; the other two, Edmonds and Choquette, were mentioned in last year's report. These two merit continued trial. We list the new varieties as follow:

**Marfield** W. I. "A" Season late June and July. A typical West Indian variety, earlier than most, of fair quality. Originated on the grove of H. A. Marsh and A. Fields, near Homestead, as a seedling planted about 1930. It fruited first in 1939. The tree bore heavily last year. Marfield represents another attempt to find an early West Indian superior to Fuchsia and Pollock. It has not been observed long enough to ascertain its true value.

**Van Kortryk** Mex. (Flower behavior not recorded) Season Sept. and Oct. A purple Mexican, of good quality, with the hardy characteristics of its race. It ripens evenly and seems resistant to disease. The tree bore heavily last year. Should interest growers in the colder parts of the Ridge.

**Courtright** Mex. (Flower behavior not recorded) Season Sept. and Oct. Another

Mexican, of less promise than the former. This variety and Van Korryk originated on the property of R. M. Courtright, in Lakeland, as a single tree developed from two seeds planted together about 1933. The trunks merged at the base as the plants grew in size.

**Marguerite** W. I. x Guat. "B" Season Oct. and Nov. A medium-large, attractive fruit of very good quality, with a thin, smooth skin. Tree bore heavily last year. This is a very good fruit in many respects, but it might require special handling because of its thin skin. It originated as a seedling planted about 1930 on the grove of Herbert Katz, near Homestead.

**Major** W. I. x Guat. "B" Season Oct. and Nov. A medium-large, very attractive fruit of very good quality. The tree bore only a light crop last year. It originated on the same grove as the Marguerite, as a chance seedling planted about 1937.

None of these five varieties has been tested extensively as yet, and we suggest that persons interested in trying them contact the owners or the Subtropical Experiment Station at Homestead to arrange for propagating material. Propagation of a few of the varieties is restricted, but arrangements can be made with the owners of most of these for trial planting. At the Station, four specimens of each variety are topworked on older stocks, so that the comparative performances may be checked. Various persons have topworked a few trees to these and other new varieties, although the individual's supply of stocks is not as a rule sufficient to permit such extensive testing. Even a single tree, however, growing in a different grove or section, is of interest both to its possessor and to the Committee.

Besides the varieties actually registered, the Committee has checked on numerous seedlings, some of which will probably be eventually registered. In this connection we ask your cooperation, as war-time restrictions on travel make it difficult to get around as much as we would like. Persons who own or know of promising seedlings can help us by writing the Secretary at the Subtropical Experiment Station in Homestead. The Secretary will also be glad to send propagating material, when it is available, to anyone who wishes to help in trying out these seedlings.

In closing we should like to call to your attention the recently revised bulletin, "Avocado Production in Florida." This is Agricultural Extension Service Bulletin No. 112. In addition to much other valuable information, it contains descriptions of the commercial varieties and an excellent check list of practically all of the varieties that have ever been planted in the State.