

## AVOCADO POLLINATION IN CALIFORNIA GROWING CONDITIONS

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This project is in a very early stage, since it deals with avocado pollination, and avocado bloom is just beginning

*What insects visit avocado and what is their potential as pollinators?* Orchards have been identified in three growing regions in order to survey the insect vectors that are contributing to pollination. The three sites include Covey Lane in San Diego, Pine Tree Ranch in Ventura and The South Coast Field Station in Orange County. We have begun weekly surveys of insect visitors and their behavior which will continue throughout the bloom period. We expect to determine what insects visit avocado blossoms, and the relative contribution of different insects to pollen transfer.

*How can we best use honey bees in avocado management?* We are studying bee visitation rates in an orchard in Saticoy, Ventura County, where we have placed bee colonies. We will assess bee densities weekly at various distances from the colonies, and then correlate these with yield differences at harvest. This will provide information both on yield versus visitation rate relations and on hive placement versus visitation rates which are needed to optimize use of honey bees as pollinators.

### *The 1996 Bloom*

Unseasonably late cold weather has stopped what seemed to be an imminent bud break. In the orchards surveyed in late February, some bloom has occurred on border trees but the onset of orchard bloom is not yet at hand.