

California Avocado Association 1917 Annual Report 3: 101-104

Circular on Varieties

The Circular on Varieties prepared by the Committee on Classification and Registration of Varieties, and later modified and adopted by the Board of Directors, was published as Circular No. 1 of the California Avocado Association. For historical preservation and to further add to its usefulness this circular is reprinted here in full:

CALIFORNIA AVOCADO ASSOCIATION

CIRCULAR No. 1

Issued October 25, 1917.

AVOCADO VARIETIES RECOMMENDED FOR PLANTING IN CALIFORNIA

(A report of the special committee on Classification and Registration of Varieties, approved by the Board of Directors for publication as a circular.)

The large number of avocado varieties that have been introduced, and the general lack of exact knowledge regarding varieties, render it very difficult for the prospective planter to obtain reliable information as to what sorts are the best and safest to plant. Recognizing this difficulty, the Directors of the California Avocado Association requested the committee on Classification and Registration of Varieties to prepare and publish a list of approved varieties. Such a list prepared by the committee and approved by the Board of Directors, is published herewith.

The list includes only varieties of the so-called thick-skinned or Guatemalan type, which in general it is believed is the best and most reliable type for commercial planting. The committee does not believe that it is possible at the present time with our limited knowledge and experience, to attempt to pass on the relative commercial importance of the different classes of fruits. Only time can determiné what the market demands will be. The fact remains, however, that at the present time, a large majority of the experienced growers in California favor the use of the Guatemalan type.

Many varieties that are frequently mentioned in discussions are not included in this list. The list must be taken merely as the best judgment of the committee, at the present time, of the varieties safest to recommend for planting. Several very promising varieties are not mentioned, as the knowledge of the committee concerning them is insufficient to justify passing judgment on their qualities and comparative value. Again, some of the varieties mentioned in the list will probably be discarded later. This list, the committee expects to be of temporary value only. It should be revised by the Association every year and brought up to date to keep pace with advancing knowledge. As soon as justified by experience, varieties of other types should be included.

EXPLANATION OF LIST

The varieties are listed according to season of maturing and not in the order of their merit. It is well recognized by growers that the season of maturing of a given variety is very variable and may extend more or less throughout the year. The placing of a variety in a definite season merely indicates its usual season of maturing when it may be expected to be at its best. Varieties may extend from one season into another, and when in the judgment of the committee, a variety may be considered as important in two seasons, it is listed under both. It thus happens that several varieties are listed twice.

The percentages of oil or fat given under each variety are taken from analyses made by Professor M. E. Jaffa, of the University of California, except in the case of the Spinks, which is from an analysis made by E. M. Chace of the U. S. Department of Agriculture. These are not averages, but are the highest percentages found in any single analysis of a variety. The percentage of fat increases as the fruit matures and in view of the few analyses that have been made of any one variety, it is thought to be more instructive at present to give the highest analysis rather than an average.

The other descriptive information relative to the varieties listed is self-explanatory, but it must be remembered in using the list, that there are many variations and extremes that cannot be given in a condensed table.

Avocado orchards require several years to reach full bearing age and size, and it is a somewhat common practice to plant the orchard more thickly than is ultimately desired, using some regularly devised system providing for the removal of a certain number of the trees. The trees that are intended to be removed are ordinarily spoken of as filler trees. Special attention is directed to the value of the Lyon for use as a "filler" tree in planting. Its upright habit of growth and early fruiting render it particularly valuable for such use.

ROOTSTOCKS FOR THE AVOCADO

So much injury may be done by the use of tender or poor rootstocks in the propagation of the avocado that the committee would strongly recommend that only seedlings of the hardy Mexican avocado be used for budding and grafting stocks. Nurserymen should use this type of root-stock only for trees propagated for sale, and planters should demand that the trees purchased for planting should be on this stock. Seedlings of the ordinary varieties of the Avocado grown in Florida, the West Indies, Hawaii and Tahiti, are usually so tender that they cannot withstand the cold of California winters and are thus unsafe for use as stocks. Seedlings of the Guatemalan type are not such strong growers as the Mexican and are probably not so good to use as stocks, though they have not been thoroughly tested.

COMMITTEE

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LIST OF RECOMMENDED AVOCADO VARIETIES

Varieties	Season Dates (Inclusive)	Ave. Wt. of Fruit in Oz.	Ave. Wt. of Seed in Oz.	Percentage of Oil or Fat	Shape of Fruit	Color of Mature Fruits
SPRING VARIETIES						
Fuerte	Jan. to Aug.	12-14	1.52	30.72	Pyriform	Green
Spinks	Apr. to Aug.	16-20	3.25	16.46***	Obovate* to Pyriform	Purplish black
Blakeman	Apr. to Aug.	16	2.50	17.27	Pyriform	Green
Lyon	Apr. to Aug.	16	2.75	16.31	Pyriform	Dark green
SUMMER VARIETIES						
Spinks	Apr. to Aug.	16-20	3.25	16.46	Obovate to Pyriform	Purplish black
Blakeman	Apr. to Aug.	16	2.50	17.27	Pyriform	Green
Lyon	Apr. to Aug.	16	2.75	16.31	Pyriform	Dark green
Dickinson	June to Oct.	12	1.36	20.36	Obovate	Purplish black
Taft	May to Oct.	16	3.13	16.53	Obovate to Pyriform	Green
FALL VARIETIES						
Taft	May to Oct.	16	3.13	16.53	Obovate to Pyriform	Green
Dickinson	June to Oct.	12	1.36	20.36	Obovate	Purplish black
Sharpless	Oct. to Feb.	20	3.00	24.23	Pyriform	Dark purple maroon
WINTER VARIETIES						
Sharpless	Oct. to Feb.	20	3.00	24.23	Pyriform	Dark purple maroon
Puebla**	Dec. to Feb.	8-10	1.50	26.68	Obovate	Dark purple
Fuerte	Jan. to Aug.	12-14	1.52	30.72	Pyriform	Green

*Obovate, a term used to designate the shape of an inverted egg.

**Puebla is not strictly a Guatemalan type, but is supposed to be a hybrid.

***Since the publication of this circular Prof. Jaffa has reported one analysis of Spinks in which 21.75 per cent of oil was found.—
(Editor's note.)