

## Avocados in Coachella Valley

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General Experience has been that avocados do very poorly or fail entirely in hot desert areas. Many attempts have been made to grow the avocado in Imperial Valley, in the Yuma Mesa, and in the vicinity of Phoenix, Arizona. So far as the writer knows, all of these efforts have resulted in failure. The broad soft leaves of the avocado do not endure the heat and aridity of desert conditions.

Hearing of a tree bearing and maturing an abundance of good fruit near Indio in the Coachella Valley, the writer took occasion to investigate, and records the following observations made on September 2, 1935.

The Sun-Gold Deglet Noor Date Garden owned by Gillette and Rosenberger is located on the road between Indio and Palm Springs. It is in an extremely arid district where Deglet Noor dates are the principal crop. Some years ago Mr. Rosenberger planted a few avocado seeds. All perished except one which grew thriftily. This tree is now seven years old, about 30 feet high by 15 feet spread, an erect grower. The foliage is perfect with no sign of sunburn or other injury. Eight fruits were matured in 1933, eighty in 1934, and the writer estimated about 250 fruits on the tree at the time of his visit. The foliage and type of growth is typically Mexican. The fruits at maturity are said to be 7 to 8 ounces in size, oval, borne on long stems, slightly tinged with purple at maturity, darkening to purple after picking and when ripe. Mr. A. G. Thompson, the resident superintendent, states that the fruit is of excellent eating quality, and is greatly enjoyed. He further states that the fruit matures in late November and December.

This tree is growing in light sandy loam soil. It stands near the house and is protected from the desert winds, but is not in the shade of the date palms which are some distance away. The tree is irrigated by flooding the same as the date palms. Under the tree is a drinking fountain for the dogs, which drips continuously.

It occurs to the writer that this tree may be of great value to the avocado industry as a starting point in producing a group of seedling varieties which may succeed better under desert or semi desert conditions than any we now have. Being isolated, and the blossoms all close pollinated, seedlings from this tree should inherit more or less of its heat resisting qualities, and some of them may produce fruit of even greater commercial value.