

Committee on Foreign Exploration

B. Griswold

PRESIDENT'S ANNUAL REPORT

The activities of the Society are covered in detail by the reports in the Yearbook and a recapitulation here would serve no useful purpose. I do want to introduce, however, a new permanent committee of the Society to be known as the "Committee on Foreign Exploration".

This committee was formed as a result of a trip by Carl Crawford and myself to Central America and Mexico where we observed primitive unedible forms of the avocado growing wild in the mountain forests of those countries (1946 Yearbook, page 103).

As California avocado growers we were conscious of the avocado decline problem. When we saw these large wild trees growing in heavy soil under excessive moisture conditions with no signs of decline we were immediately struck with the possibilities that existed in using primitives as rootstocks in California. Decline is known in these countries and we reasoned that if any avocado type is resistant to decline these trees which have survived naturally from the beginning of things under wet conditions, should be excellent possibilities.

Reviewing our discoveries and observations with Dean Robert Hodgson and Dr. C. A. Schroeder of the College of Agriculture at UCLA, and others, it was determined that it was urgently desirable to form a committee to secure this plant material for test and study in California. The Society board of directors accepted these recommendations and created the new permanent committee.

The reporting of primitive avocados is not new. Wilson Popenoe has described them previously in the Yearbooks. It required the combination of Wilson Popenoe, explorer and horticulturist, and Carl Crawford and myself as practical growers with on the spot observations to set off the spark that may bring an important advance in avocado culture. Wilson Popenoe who as our host in Honduras first showed us these wild avocados has generously consented to be an active member of this new committee. From the vantage point of his home in Central America he will be invaluable in helping us secure all forms of these primitives. The other members of this committee have also given generously of their time and money as each member of past and future expeditions will finance his own expense.

The story of each expedition will be given as a separate article by a member of the party. Two of these reports are contained in this issue. For these stories see tabulation below.

Progress reports on California tests and summation of exploration discoveries will be given in subsequent annual reports. We wish to caution that the value of these primitive

avocados is as yet unknown and will not be known until exhaustive tests are completed. Propagating material has been received in California and some tests are already under way.

Purposes of the Committee

1. To sponsor and record explorations to find all types of primitive avocados and related forms in Mexico and Central America.
2. To introduce these primitives into California for study and test.
3. To test all types as root stocks—particularly for resistance to decline.
4. Also to introduce avocado varieties of possible commercial value found in the course of these explorations.

Committee Members

Mr. H. B. Griswold, Chairman, La Habra, Calif.

Mr. Carl Crawford, Santa Ana, Calif.

Mr. Marvin Rounds, Whittier, Calif.

Mr. Harold Wahlberg, Santa Ana, Calif.

Mr. Elwood Trask, Carlsbad, Calif.

Dean Robert W. Hodgson, UCLA, Los Angeles, Calif.

Dr. C. A. Schroeder, UCLA, Los Angeles, Calif.

Dr. Wilson Popenoe, Tegucigalpa, Honduras, C. A.

Dr. Luis O. Williams, Tegucigalpa, Honduras, C. A.

Sr. Henri Gilly, Puebla, Mexico.

Expeditions

Pre-committee—October 1946—Central America & Mexico

1946 Yearbook, page 103

No. 1 May 1947—Mexico—1947 Yearbook page 29

No. 2 October 1947—Mexico—1947 Yearbook, page 22