

## SEEDLING AVOCADOS

**J. E. Higgins**

Wishing information as to the action of seedling avocados in the Hawaiian Islands, where that fruit has been a favorite for many years, Mr. Ernest Braunton wrote Mr. J. E. Higgins, of the Hawaiian Experiment Station at Honolulu, and from him has the following:

"It is difficult to state what percentage of our seedling avocado trees turn out to be of clear commercial value. If you mean by this, what proportion turn out to be superior to those which we already have and which would, therefore, be worth while for further propagation, the percentage would be quite low. I have no accurate records from our station plantings, since these are now just beginning to come into bearing. The percentage of good trees is entirely too small to warrant anyone starting a seedling orchard as a commercial proposition.

"When grown from seeds the resultant trees do not bear fruit resembling that of the parent as closely as do seedling orchards of citrus resemble their parents. There is a very wide variation. Seeds from purple fruit may come green, and vice versa; those from a round or pear shaped fruit may be elongated. There is quite as wide a variation in bearing habits.

"We have succeeded in growing some plants from cuttings, but we do not regard this as a practical means for the propagation of the avocado. In budding we get from 80 to 90 per cent of successful buds on strong seedling, nursery or orchard trees when about one and a half or two years old. A well grown tree might be budded when it is a year old. In top working orchard trees the percentage may fall to as low as 50 per cent, but we expect between 60 and 75.

"We bud in nearly every month in the year if the trees are in such condition that the bark will slip. The months which we prefer are from January to July, and the earlier in this period the better. Our trees begin to put forth new growth about December or the first of January.

"I am glad to learn of your observations on avocado in California and to find that it does not appear to be too tropical in character for your climate. If it proves to be adapted to any large areas in California, it will certainly become an important industry."—J. E. Higgins.

Plainly it is a mistake to plant seedlings excepting with the expectation of working over.