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A SUGGESTION

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I will be unable to attend the meeting of the Horticultural Society this year, but there is a matter which I wish could be brought to the attention of the Krome Memorial Institute. This is the establishment of some kind of a variety committee for avocados.

As matters now stand, we have in addition to the most popular commercial varieties, a number which were planted extensively in past years but which should now be replaced with superior kinds, and a large number of hybrids and West Indian seedlings which show promise. There should be some authority to which interested persons could turn to find out what varieties will best suit their needs. Moreover, I would like to point out that a good variety committee can be of great value in sorting out the promising new varieties from the inferior ones. To this end I suggest that the Institute consider formation of a permanent Variety Committee similar to that which has functioned so admirably in California.

Details of this I leave to you and the members of the Institute, but there are a few points I would like to mention. One is the matter of how extensive a list should be made, if it is to be published in the proceedings of the Horticultural Society. You know the California group used to publish a very complete list each year, but this became too large, and they now confine themselves to about thirty varieties, grouping them as "Varieties in commercial production, plantings not being extended," "Varieties the planting of which is being extended," and "Varieties of promise, needing more extensive trial." This same method might be satisfactory for us, and anyone desiring information on other varieties could obtain it from the Committee, which would of course keep records of all varieties brought to its attention.

As to membership of the Committee, make sure that it covers the whole production area, but I think it would be well to secure the cooperation of the Subtropical Experiment Station. It is the only organization I know of which is equipped to make the proper measurements and analyses, and possibly descriptions by men trained in that line would be more lucid than those by us laity.

Another thing; while the methods of the California committee are fine, and may well serve as a guide for us, it would be a good idea to adopt a more limited descriptive terminology for the final summation of the quality and value of a variety. For instance, have four or five classes for the fruit as far as quality is concerned, and stick to them, shunning such phrases as "quality fine", which leaves one in doubt as to whether the fruit is considered "good", "very good," or "excellent," if these latter terms have been decided upon as the proper ones. I would not mention this but for the fact that I came upon such euphemisms in the California check list.

Mr. Lynch pointed out that the California descriptions do not indicate the flower type of the varieties. A Florida check list should do this.

And finally, there is the problem of registration of varieties. Again, we might well follow the example of the California committee. They have a very practical and convenient method by which all varieties are registered with the committee for testing. The form letter by which a new variety is registered insures that it will be properly named, and supplies accurate data as to the origin and chief characteristics of the parent tree. You might refer to the 1940 yearbook of the California Avocado Association for more particulars on this subject.

If it is agreed that we need to organize and extend our knowledge of avocado varieties in this state I hope the idea can be considered by the Institute.