

Proc. Fla. State Hort. Soc. 55:122-125. 1942.

REPORT OF THE AVOCADO VARIETY COMMITTEE

WM. H. KROME

Homestead, Florida

After more than a quarter of a century of commercial cultivation, there still exists within the avocado industry of Florida a certain amount of confusion as to variety names, and as to the relative merits of the different varieties. Moreover, there has been no plan whereby the new seedling varieties which are constantly brought to light could be methodically checked and evaluated, nor has there been any specific group charged with encouraging the exploitation of our new seedlings. Various individuals and the Sub-Tropical Experiment Station at Homestead have done much work along these lines, and their findings have usually been published in the annals of this Society. This Committee has these problems as its primary concern, and hopes to work with the Experiment Station and such persons as are interested, furthering the work in any way that it can. Your Committee is well aware of the size of its task. We were familiar with the work of a similar committee in California, which has functioned successfully ever since 1916, and, hoping to avoid unnecessary mistakes, we have availed ourselves of its experience in many instances. As a result the set-up we propose is like that of the California committee in many respects.

Registration of new seedlings:

Heretofore, when an individual chanced upon a seedling which he considered to have merit, as a rule he had to determine its value as well as he could with what information and equipment he possessed. It is probable also that valuable fruits have been overlooked. We hope to encourage the bringing forth of such fruits, and to that end are providing a convenient method of registering and testing them which will also eliminate duplication and confusion of names. When a person who has a promising new avocado seedling wishes to have it tested more thoroughly, he may obtain an application blank for its registration, fill it in and mail it, along with two or three representative samples of the fruit, to the secretary of the Committee, who is at present Mr. Lynch of the Sub-Tropical Experiment Station at Homestead. Here it will be tested and its characteristics compared with other varieties of the same season. If the seedling is considered sufficiently promising to warrant propagation and further trial, it will be registered under the name the owner has chosen for it, provided this does not conflict with the name of another variety, and a certificate of registration of that name will be sent the owner. This will give him no legal title to the name, to be sure, but he may be certain that no other variety will be registered by that title. At the same time, the Committee's report of its findings may help him in estimating the value of the avocado. Then, if he desires, the Committee will help him arrange for propagation of a few trees in different localities so that the behavior of the variety under the different conditions may be observed. The period required before a variety can be considered worthy of extensive propagation is at

best several years, so it is important that a promising new seedling be tried out as thoroughly and expeditiously as possible. Where the owner wishes to patent his avocado, he must do his testing on his own stocks, but even so the appraisal of several individuals of presumed competence would be helpful, and in some cases their judgment might save an over-enthusiastic owner the expense of patenting something of dubious value. At this time we should like to solicit the assistance of members who have stocks upon which new seedlings may be tried. We want to provide for observing them in all the avocado growing regions of the State. The testing of varieties in this manner is of considerable interest to many of us, and as the avocados selected for trial are usually a distinct improvement over the average seedling, propagation of two or three specimens works no financial hardship upon the collaborator.

Variety list:

The registration of new varieties presumes the existence of a comprehensive list of all established ones. This is not at present available, but descriptions of the better known ones can be found in Experiment Station Bulletin 272, while a paper presented before this Institute by Mr. Lynch last year is an excellent summary of several of the more promising new varieties. A revision of Bulletin 272 is now in press and contains a complete list of all Florida varieties. Hereafter we will confine ourselves to varieties of current importance. This is similar to the procedure followed by the California committee, which annually lists varieties under three classifications:

1. Varieties in commercial production, plantings not being expanded.
2. Varieties in commercial production, plantings being expanded.
3. Seedlings of promise meriting more extensive trial.

In addition they publish a complete list of registered seedlings. They thus indicate the merit of all important varieties as reflected by popular demand, limiting their own judgment to the newer varieties with which the growers are not so familiar, and to the actual descriptions of the commercial varieties. Your Committee plans to do likewise, and will also include a list of varieties which are not considered of commercial importance but whose quality warrants planting for home use. At this time we will merely present a tentative list, reserving detailed discussion of their merits and demerits for the future check list. We have no registered seedlings, and will divide our list of varieties which have not yet attained wide distribution into those which are being tried fairly extensively, and those which might be thus tried. We expect that this list will be revised in another year, indeed we expect it to be changed annually.

Varieties in Commercial Production, Plantings Not Being Extended

Pollock "B" W. I. Season late July and August. Fruit large, quality excellent. Tree vigorous but an undependable bearer. Still planted for home use on East Coast.

Simmonds "A" W. I. Season July 15 to September 15. Fruit large, quality excellent.

Tree lacks vigor.

Trapp "B" W. I. Season late August to the middle of October. Fruit medium-large, quality good. Tree prolific but subject to insect pests.

Peterson "A" W. I. Season Sept. through Oct. Fruit medium-sized, quality good. Tree small and susceptible to cold injury.

Winslowson "B" W. I. x Guat. Season Oct. 15 to Dec. 15. Fruit large, quality fair. A poor shipper; subject to damage in cold storage. Tree lacks vigor.

Collinson "A" W. I. x Guat. Season late Oct. through mid-Dec. Fruit medium-large, quality fair. A poor shipper. Tree vigorous but only moderately productive and produces no pollen. Still planted occasionally in the Ridge Section.

Linda "B" Guat. Season Dec. 15 to Feb. 15. Fruit large, quality good, color at maturity a deep maroon which detracts from its marketability. Tree vigorous but only moderately productive.

Wagner "A" Guat. Season Jan. 15 to March 15. Fruit small, quality poor. Subject to black spot. Tree rather weak, and not sufficiently productive.

Schmidt "B" Guat. Season Feb. to April. Fruit large, quality fair; subject to cold damage in storage. Tree is a weak grower and a poor bearer.

Itzamna "B" Guat. Season Feb. 15 to May 15. Fruit medium to large, quality usually poor; it sometimes fails to ripen uniformly. Tree vigorous, and moderately productive. A few are still planted because of the extreme lateness of its season.

Varieties In Commercial Production, Plantings Being Extended

Fuschia (Fuchs) "A" W. I. Season June 15 to Aug. 15. Fruit medium-sized, quality fair for an early variety. A poor shipper when fully mature. Tree vigorous and a regular bearer. Too susceptible to cold injury for the Eidge section.

Waldin "A" W. I. Season Sept. 20 to Nov. 15. Fruit medium-sized, quality good. Tree moderately vigorous and prolific. Too susceptible to cold injury for most of the Ridge section.

Booth No. 8 "B" W. I. x Guat. Season Oct. 15 to Dec. 1. Fruit medium-sized, quality fair. Tree vigorous, precocious and prolific. Planted in Ridge section and on East Coast.

Booth No. 7 "B" W. I. x Guat. Season late Oct. to late Dec. Fruit medium-sized, quality good. Tree vigorous, precocious and prolific. Planted in Ridge section and on East Coast.

Hickson "B" W. I. x Guat. Season Nov. to Jan. 15. Fruit medium-sized, quality excellent. Tree tall, rapid growing. Seems to bear fairly well, although its vitality is sometimes sapped by heavy crops. Has not been tried as extensively as other accepted varieties but is quite popular in the Redlands. Merits trial in the Ridge section, but may be too tender for that region.

Lula "A" Guat. x Mex. Season Dec. 1 to Feb. 1. Fruit medium-sized, quality fair. Subject to scab. Tree tall, vigorous and productive. Quite resistant to cold. Popular in the Ridge section and on east Coast.

Taylor "A" Guat. Season Dec. 15 to Feb. 15. Fruit small, quality fair. Subject to black spot. Tree tall, vigorous, cold-resistant, only moderately productive. Planted in Ridge section and on the East Coast.

Nabal. "B" Guat. Season Dec. 1 to Feb. 15. Fruit small or medium-sized, quality good. Subject to black spot. Tree vigorous, prolific, moderately cold-resistant. Has weak wood. Planted in the Ridge section.

Varieties Not Planted Commercially But Suitable For Home Planting

Mitchell "A" Season Aug. 1 to Sept. 15. Size large, quality excellent. A heavier bearer than Pollock. Too tender for planting in the Ridge section.

Bitte "B" W. I. Season Oct. 1 to Nov. 10. Fruit medium-sized, quality excellent although flesh contains a few black fibers. Tree not particularly vigorous or prolific. Too tender for planting in the Ridge section.

Fairchild "A" W. I. x Guat. Season Oct. 1 to Dec. 1. Fruit medium-large, quality excellent, color red. A heavy and regular bearer. Less hardy to cold than many W. I. Guat, hybrids, but might well be tried in the warmer parts of the Ridge section.

Nelson. "B" W. I. x Guat. Season Nov. 1 to Jan. 15. Fruit medium-sized, somewhat better quality than Booth No. 7, which it resembles. Has a weak stem. Tree very large and vigorous, a good bearer. About as hardy as the Booth varieties.

Varieties Being Tried Extensively

Booth No. 1 "A" W. I. x Guat. Season Jan. and Feb. Fruit medium to large, quality poor, seed very large. Tree moderately vigorous, and a regular bearer.

Booth No. 3 "B" W. I. x Guat. Season Nov. to Feb. Fruit medium-small, quality fair. Tends to drop its crop in late Nov. Tree very prolific but subject to insect pests.

Bonita "A" W. I. x Guat. Season Nov. through Jan. Fruit medium-large, quality rather poor. The name should be changed, as it conflicts with a variety already registered in California.

Hall "B" W. I. x Guat. Season Jan. to March. Fruit large resembling a West Indian. Seed large. Tree vigorous and prolific.

Harris "A" W. I. x Guat. Season Dec. to Feb. Fruit small, quality fair. Tree vigorous, prolific.

Herman "A" W. I. x Guat. Season Nov, through Jan. Fruit medium-sized, quality good. Tree vigorous and apparently prolific.

Tonnage (Taylor "B" "B" W. I. x Guat. Season Oct. and Nov. Fruit medium-sized to large, quality fair. Tree moderately vigorous and productive.

Seedling Varieties Now Being Given Limited Trial

Booth No. 7-B "B" W. I. x Guat. A seedling confused with Booth 7. It is Nov. and Dec. fruit of medium size. Tree vigorous and apparently prolific.

Booth No. 10 "B" W. I. x Guat. Season Nov. to Jan Fruit medium-size, quality fair, seed medium-small. Tree vigorous, moderately prolific.

Booth No. 11 "B" W. I. x Guat Season Nov. to Jan. Fruit medium to large, quality good, seed medium. Tree vigorous and apparently prolific.

Byars W. I. x Guat. Season March and April. Fruit large, quality excellent.

Choquette W. I. x Guat. Season Jan. to April. Fruit large, quality good. Resembles the Byars seedling.

Edmonds "B" W. I. x Guat. Season Sept. to Nov. 1. Fruit medium-sized, quality excellent. Tree vigorous and reasonably productive. One of the earliest of the hybrids.

Frank W. I. x Guat. Season Feb. to April. A medium-sized fruit resembling Collinson.

Lindgren "A" W. I. x Guat. Season Nov. and Dec. Fruit small, quality good but seed rather large. Tree thrifty and reported to be a good bearer.

Vaca "B" W. I. x Guat. Season Dec. and Jan. Fruit medium to large, quality good, seed very loose. Tree vigorous, precocious and prolific.

Before closing this report, I should like to mention that during the past season a large number of different seedling avocados were made available for sampling by one of the local packing houses. A few of these merit further investigation, but the chief result of testing them was to impress the writer with the great desirability of topworking most seedlings to some tolerable variety.

W. H. Krome, Chairman,
S. J. Lynch
W. F. Ward
Harold Kendall