

THIRD REPORT OF THE AVOCADO VARIETY COMMITTEE

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The avocado season just passed proved to be the most successful in the history of the avocado industry in Florida, both from the standpoint of production and returns to the growers. The heavy shipments during the fall and early winter months emphasized the shift which the industry is making in planting and topworking to varieties which mature during this period.

Among the West Indian varieties, Pollock during the summer and Waldin in the early fall both produced good crops. This is the first good crop from Pollocks in several years so there will be little incentive to increase the plantings of this variety. Waldin is being planted in small quantities but practically no topworking is being done to this variety. The last part of the Waldin crop can usually be held off the market until the heavy Cuban competition has passed so there is an incentive to keep the present trees of this variety with little tendency for topworking it to later maturing sorts. The extremely heavy crop of Waldins caused the leaning limbs to expose the fruits to the sun, resulting in much unmarketable sunburned fruit this past season.

Fuchsia, Simmonds and Trapp generally produced a light crop. This is in keeping with their previous performances and the plantings of these varieties are not being extended. There has been considerable topworking to late-maturing varieties of both Simmonds and Trapp. Peterson, planted only in small blocks, matured a heavy crop but from its past erratic record this variety can well be discarded as a commercial sort in favor of Waldin.

The hybrids were the outstanding producers for the fall and winter months. Booth 8 matured the heaviest crop in its history. The heavy set of fruit resulted in smaller sizes which in turn increased the returns per bushel. Booth 7 and Lula also matured good crops. The larger average fruit size of the Lula played some part in the slightly lower returns per bushel for this variety. Collinson, which has been rapidly disappearing as a commercial sort, matured a good crop of fruit. This encouraging crop will perhaps retard the cutting down of Collinsons for a year or so but, from the past ten years' yield records and the difficulty of marketing this fruit, the Committee cannot recommend it for South Florida. Hickson produced a fair crop and indicated its alternate bearing habit, in common with Booth 7 and 8. It is still on the tentative list for further observation.

Among the late varieties Taylor produced a medium crop in most groves but only a light crop in others. Booth 1 matured a heavy crop of attractive fruit. Trees that were lightened about 80 percent in December carried the remaining 20 percent of the crop until March. Although the returns to the grower have been excellent from Booth 1, the variety cannot be recommended because of the large seed which makes up about 35 percent of the fruit by weight. A few complaints were received this year from the

northern markets regarding this seed size and it is to be expected that these complaints will increase. However, some topworking and planting to Booth 1 is continuing in South Florida. Wagner matured a fair to good crop in most groves but has proved too unreliable over the years to be recommended. Itzamna produced the usual light crop. This is the latest maturing variety. Both Wagner and Itzamna are being topworked to more reliable varieties.

There are several new promising varieties that are being planted or topworked to a limited extent. Among these, Hall and Herman follow last year's creditable performances and are being planted commercially in limited numbers. Hall, under the strain of heavy crops, matures its fruit in late November and December in the Redland District. This has been a disappointment to some growers who hoped for a January and February fruit. Choquette has been released to the public and is being grown primarily as a yard fruit.

Nabal produced a heavy crop in the Ridge section, which brought good prices, and after an unusually late bloom this spring has set another good crop.

The varieties being planted or grafted in the greatest quantities in the order of their importance are Lula, Booth 8, Booth 7, Taylor and Waldin. This is a desirable trend away from the many and varied sorts which have been planted in past years. This list includes those recommended by the Committee for commercial planting which have proved profitable and are desirable from the marketing standpoint. For the Ridge section Nabal should be added to these.

During the past year three seedlings were registered and certificates issued. Two of these are new and the third, Lindgren, had been described previously in the 1941 Proceedings.

Gulfstream WI x Guat. (Flower behavior not recorded.) A medium size, pyriform fruit with a smooth, bright green skin and a bright yellow flesh of excellent flavor. First fruited in 1941 on the property of Mr. Geo. W. Smith, 901 35th street, West Palm Beach. The three crops it has borne have been quite heavy and this variety should be watched with interest.

Alma WI x Guat. (Flower behavior not recorded.) A roundish, purpleskinned fruit with a rather large seed and a flesh of excellent flavor. The tree, on the property of Mr. Heinrich Rohde, 74 South Lake View Drive, Sebring, Florida, is 22 years old. It has never been hurt by cold in this time. The fruit is of interest for home use in the colder portions of the State.

The Committee members have observed and tasted dozens of seedlings during the year but none has appeared worthy of registry other than these three listed above. Applications for registration of new seedlings are available from the Secretary and will be sent on request.