

AVOCADO VARIETIES FOR THE TROPICS: THE CASE OF COLOMBIA

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Colombia, a country located in the Northwest part of South America, produces avocados in the range of 0 to 2200 meters above the sea level. Over the last 40 years, research has been carried out on avocado varieties for the different thermal floors, with avocados from the Mexican, Guatemalan and West Indian races as well as with crosses among them. The mixture of different cultivars allows production during ten months of the year and many cultivars allow the maintenance of the fruit on the tree.

This work includes the description and characterization of nine avocado cultivars. Information is included about the race, flower type, adaptation (meters above the sea level), weight in grams, color of the cortex, oil percentage, pulp percentage, flowering percentage, flowering per year, length of harvesting season, altitude (meters), diameter of the canopy (meters), volume of the canopy (cm³) and a fruit photograph. This work is the result of 46 years of research in the field, in experimental centers, in nurseries and commercial orchards throughout Colombia. There are cultivars with 600 grams fruit weight and 7% oil while others produce fruits with an average weight of 285 grams and 24% oil content. Since avocado originated in South and Central America, its production potential for local consumption as well as for export as fresh or processed product, presents a great potential for our countries and the knowledge in depth of the cultivars to be planted should be the starting point of a promising agroindustry which would allow the establishment of strategic alliances with promoters and companies of consuming countries which would take advantages of the optimum production conditions of Colombia.