

DIFFERENT MOUNTAIN AVOCADO TYPES DISCOVERED IN COSTA-RICA

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In a study of Avocado genetic resources, the related species were explored in Costa Rica. It was found in this country that the native avocado population and its botanical relatives are unique and differ from those known from northern countries. One unique item is the mountain avocado of Costa Rica, hereby described as a new sub-species-*Persea americana* var. *Costaricensis*. This is an abundant type of avocado, distributed in elevation between 1200 and 2000 m. above sea level. The fruit characteristics separate it from other known sub-species: it is much smaller than West Indian (*P. americana* var. *Americana*), and Guatemalan (*P. americana* var. *Guatemalensis*) avocados, it has skin like the West - Indian avocado in its pale green color, soft leathery texture, medium thickness and peelability, but a seed like the Guatemalan avocado in its oblate form and surface. The possibility of being hybrid of the above mentioned two "races" is discussed and contradicted. Other interesting type described in this article is the wild avocado of Monteverde, a unique type of avocado, not known from any other habitat, but only from the wild forest of Monteverde, and it could not be recognized botanically, as any other known species. Its description shows that it is closer to *Persea nubigena* than to any known avocado, but its fruit is much bigger. The evolution of the avocado that was discovered in Moteverde and measures for its future conservation and evaluation are discussed.