

**MORPHOLOGICAL CHARACTERIZATION OF WEST INDIAN AVOCADO FRUITS (*Persea americana* Mill.) OF THE CANARY ISLANDS TOLERANT-RESISTANT TO *Phytophthora cinnamomi***

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Avocado is the second tropical crop of Spain. The main commercial cultivars correspond to Mexican and Guatemalan races. However, the Canary Islands have an important population of West Indian avocado trees dating back to the 15th century when trade commenced between the Canaries and South and Central America. West Indian fruits are well known and popular in local markets and used as grafting rootstocks for commercial cultivars. For these reasons, the *Instituto Canario de Investigaciones Agrarias* (ICIA) developed a selection program of West Indian rootstocks tolerant-resistant to *Phytophthora cinnamomi*, the main disease affecting this crop and factor limiting its yield.

It is very important to know the morphological characteristics of these perfectly adapted trees to local environment conditions. The aim of the present work has been the characterization of 41 West Indian trees in the ICIA collection, in accordance with the descriptors of the International Plant Genetic Resources Institute (IPGRI). Fruit groups present in the sample have been also searched. Multivariate statistics analysis was performed. We have found several trees that appear particularly promising either for their excellent fruit characteristics (size, shape, colour and pulp proportion of the fruit to be freshly consumed) or for their potential as rootstocks.