

INCORPORATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF AVOCADO GERMPLASM BANK (*Persea americana*. Mill) IN CHILE.

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The exact period in which avocado was introduced in Chile has not been determined yet. Some information indicates that such introduction occurred at the beginning of the 17th century and some other data mention that this was in the middle of the 19th century. According to historical evidences, some seeds of unripe fruit were brought into by the Incas from the Andean Valleys. California varieties were first introduced as from the 1930s, which causes the current existence of a great genetic diversity constituted by several varieties of avocado cultivars and rootstocks distributed in different producing areas of our country. Due to the importance of conservation, management and study of these genetic resources, the Faculty of Agricultural Sciences from *Pontificia Universidad Católica de Valparaiso* began in 1976 the establishment of an orchard for the collection of avocado trees, which is currently part of the Germplasm Bank. Likewise, as part of important research projects, initiated in 2002 and still made, the collection of more promising material has been possible domestically and abroad. The creation of the Germplasm Bank will allow continuing with the studies relating to search, validation and management of outstanding material regarding organoleptic characteristics as well as resistance to adverse edaphoclimatic conditions.