

THE MANGO IN CALIFORNIA

L. L. Bucklew

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The following notes cover the results to date of a sixteen year experiment with mangoes in San Diego County.

The location is two miles from the ocean at an elevation of 330 feet. The soil is a fine sandy loam, 3 to 15 feet deep, with 10% slope to the west. Good quality water and air drainage.

There has been no damage from cold, as temperatures dropped to a minimum of 30 degrees only three times in eleven years. This advantage is offset by a lack of sufficient hot weather. Some varieties mature very slowly, or not at all. When the temperature in the spring continues above 50 degrees, there is ample fruit set.

Fertilization, irrigation, pest and disease control, as well as grafting, are conventional and present no major problems.

A total of thirty-two varieties and strains are included in this plantation, coming from Florida, Mexico, Jamaica, Honduras and Honolulu. Grafted and budded trees from out of this state, either balled or in cans, have not been a success as the root systems do not develop properly. Scions from above named sources develop well on locally grown seedlings. A total of 172 trees have been grown from Manila type seeds for rootstocks. Some of these seedlings have fruited.

On account of the lack of sufficient heat units in summer, most Florida varieties do not mature until December when cool nights prevent some from maturing. To overcome this, and with the objective of getting varieties which will mature here in October or early November, budwood of four varieties was secured from Florida and Honolulu. The ones selected mature in April and May in the source localities. The oldest of these grafts is three years old; too young for definite conclusions. However, one of these grafts was on a sucker on a four inch trunk. It developed rapidly and the first fruit matured last November. This variety "EARLYGOLD" came from Florida. This fruit weighed 8 ounces and measured 4-1/8 by 3-1/4 by 2-1/2 inches. The skin was light yellow, pulp orange color, medium juicy, 20% sugar with very little short fiber on the edge of seed. The flavor was excellent. This early maturing Florida variety may be the answer sought for sixteen years. The other three grafts may also prove satisfactory.

There is an extensive interest in the possibility of mango culture in California. If they can be produced commercially, they would have the advantage of maturing and reaching the market when there is no competition from other mango producing areas. Furthermore, there are only a few places in California where a combination of freedom from frost with hot summers permit the fruit to mature before cool weather retards or stops maturation.

In the conduct of this mango experiment, encouragement and much valuable assistance has been received. Appreciation for this is extended to many friends, and particularly to David Fairchild, Wilson Popenoe, George Ruehle and staff, C. A. Schroeder, George Zentmyer, J. Eliot Coit, W. B. Storey and Dean F. Palmer.