

# *The* **AVOCADO**

A Competence  
with Contentment

By  
T. J. WALKER



Compliments of  
**ED FLETCHER COMPANY**  
920 8th Street                      San Diego, Calif.

Give fools their gold, and knaves their  
power,  
Let fortune's bubbles rise and fall;  
Who sows a field or trains a flower,  
Or plants a tree, is more than all.

—Whittier.

**T**HIS BOOK is expressly written to and published for those whose tendencies and aspirations find root in the soil. Its appeal to those who live in the city will be doubly emphasized, for it offers a solution to their problems and a realization of their ambition—to get out into the country, next to the soil. To those already familiar with the wholesome, natural joys of country life, its appeal will be possibly less romantic but, at the same time, prove an important factor in perpetuating their desire—that of investment.

San Fernando, Los Angeles County, California,  
February 10, 1925.

The figures as given in this article, in some cases on the performance of an individual tree and in other cases of hundreds of trees, are very conservative. The prices received for the fruit of the budded varieties are based on a period covering five years. During all that time I do not recall a single instance where the price of this fruit went below twenty cents a pound, and frequently as high as eighty cents per pound. I should say the average would be forty cents per pound.

There are today in Southern California hundreds of trees eight years of age that are producing annual crops that will run well over one hundred dollars to the tree. A tree at this age is not so large but what a hundred trees to the acre can be successfully grown.

The question of soil, water and climatic conditions is a large factor in producing crops.

I have been growing citrus trees commercially for over twenty years. Some nine years ago I was sent on a mission by the United States Government to Central America and it was largely through the observations while on this visit that I became an avocado enthusiast, I am thoroughly of the belief that its culture will return to those who give it due care, a greater return per acre than that of any other product known to man.

T. J. WALKER.

Experimental Groves at:  
Solana Beach, San Diego County, California.

# The Avocado--as Grown in California



An avocado tree on the Hayden place, Old Town, San Diego. Last year this 6-year-old tree produced 680 avocados weighing an average of 1 pound each.

**I**N 1915 the California Avocado Association was organized in the City of Los Angeles by a few enthusiasts who were growing isolated trees from Santa Barbara to San Diego. Today the association has nearly 500 members.

In tropical America the Avocado is not placed in the same category as other fruits, but is con-



sidered as a staple food product, and of equal importance with rice and beans as the substantial part of the noonday meal. Americans going to the tropics soon learn to relish it as one of the most delicious and satisfying of the tropical products. Returning home the traveler goes into ecstasies at the sight of "Avocado Salad" on the hotel menu, even at one dollar per portion and, learning that the fruit can be grown in California, asks why it is not extensively planted here and made part of our daily food.

Ten years ago if you had mentioned the avocado as a horticultural possibility for California, nine out of ten persons would have said it was all right, but that we would never grow it. If they had at that time seen some of the seedlings that were coming into bearing in Southern California, producing regularly and abundantly, they would have realized that there was plenty of evidence to prove that it could be grown successfully.

There are scattered throughout Southern California along our frostless foothills, locations which are ideal for the growing of the avocado, as far as climatic conditions are concerned. There are approximately one thousand acres of trees in Southern California in one district, namely, at and within eight miles of Solana Beach, San Diego County. There has been planted within the last two years, about one half of the entire acreage of the State. Such lands for the growing of this veritable "tree of gold" are almost priceless.

It is a peculiarity of the human race that they will go to the far corners of the earth for gold—to Alaska or Siberia with its cold, Death Valley of California with its heat, malaria swamps of Africa will not stop them, while here in California, the greatest country on the face of the earth, with everything one's heart could desire, we find greater prospects for gold per yard than was ever known to man, and the beauty of it is that it is renewed every year. Crops are developed by the soil, water and sunshine, together with the human energy of mankind.

Get the right kind of a tree, a budded one, that will produce. They are really beautiful trees with their rich evergreen leaf and shape. They respond to good treatment quickly. Become intimate with them and you will soon learn to love them. The profits derived from them will be greater than any other fruit grown.

Everyone in Southern California has an opportunity of being the rich possessor of a few of these trees.

#### VARIETIES AND TYPES

The subject of varieties and types is probably the most important which must be considered in connection with the development of the industry. This work to quite an extent has been done by a few pioneers, the Avocado Association and Wilson Poponoe, Agricultural Plant Explorer of the Department of Agriculture.

By far the larger part of the old trees now in bearing here came from Mexico, principally from Monterey and other sections in the State of Nuevo Leon. The type from these regions is usually very small, in shape pyriform or oval, purple in

color and thin skin. It comes into bearing at five to seven years from planting and usually is very productive, producing as high as 5,000 fruits or more in one crop on the old trees. The flavor is generally very fine, but it has several characteristics which disqualify it for commercial purposes and it is, consequently, attracting very little attention from people who are planting out orchards. This applies to all of the Mexicans, with the exception of the Puebla and the Fuerte, both of which bear many indications of being a hybrid between the Guatemalan and the Mexican fruit. It is, however, much sought for by the nurseryman for its seed on account of the hardiness and strong, thrifty root stock, it being more resistant to both frost and heat.

The second type has become generally known as the Gautemalan for the reason that it is mostly grown in Gautemala. The principal characteristics which distinguish it from the Mexican type is the woody skin of the fruit, which is sometimes a quarter of an inch thick and it is called the "hard-shell," the fruits varying in form from round to pyriform and elongated, weighing from six ounces to as high as forty ounces. The foliage is usually deep green in color and is easily distinguished from the Mexican, the leaves of which are anise scented.

The splendid fruit which we are raising here today, said by some to be superior to that raised in Gautemala, is due in a large degree to the great care and cultivation of the trees planted and to the careful work of a few of the old growers. Plant Explorer Wilson Poponoe has spent several months in Gautemala, principally in the District of Antigua, Alta Vera Paz, Baja Vera Paz, selecting budwood which was sent on to Washington, and there used in budding into seedlings and then distributed to different points in Southern California. A few of these trees are just coming into bearing and it is expected that some of the fruit will be equally as good, or better, than the proved varieties of today. Plantings are confined to about a dozen varieties. Taking into consideration climatic conditions it is possible, by a careful selection, to market fruit every month in the year.





## Solana Beach, the Center of the Great Avocado Industry



On the hillsides along the Los Angeles-San Diego State highway, overlooking the ocean, immediately adjacent to Solana Beach, are several hundred acres of avocados. With the ideal climate here, together with the best transportation facilities and an abundance of water, this new city promises to become the Avocado Capitol of the World. On April 1st, 1923, this town was a grain field.

### INVESTMENT POSSIBILITIES

Especial attention is called to the possibilities of profit in growing these remarkable trees. There is growing on a place belonging to Jos. H. Walker, 1547 Las Palmas Avenue, Hollywood, right back of the Grauman Theatre Building, a tree that has produced in one year over \$1,800.00 worth of fruit. He has had several \$1500.00 and \$1200.00 worth of crops on the tree. The tree is about twenty-five years old.

On the Chas. W. Wagner place at 1295 Fairfax Avenue, Hollywood, Mr. Wagner has trees that produce from two to three hundred dollars worth of fruit. Suppose you had fifty of these large trees on an acre. Figure the results.

The old Taft tree at Orange has produced as high as \$800.00 worth of fruit in one year, and it is reported to have a crop of about 3000 fruits this year. A few years ago there was a tree in the Whittier District that produced \$1200.00 worth of fruit and \$1800.00 worth of budwood in one year.

J. R. Newberry at Carlsbad has a tree less than five years old that has produced over three hundred dollars worth of fruit in one year.

A 5-year-old tree of J. R. Newberry, Carlsbad, produced over \$300.00 worth of fruit.

Wilson Poponoe, agricultural expert for the United States Department of Agriculture, who spent two years in Guatemala and Mexico investigating the avocado for the government, says in his book published by MacMillan Company: "The most remarkable record which has been made by commercial planting of budded trees is that of F. T. Whedon, of Yorba Linda, Calif. Whedon's planting of the Fuerte variety containing fifty trees (about half an acre) produced a crop of fruit when five years old, which sold for \$1,700. Mr. Whedon also stated in a paper read before the Avocado Association of California that these fifty trees produced \$16.00 worth of fruit per tree the second and third years after the trees were transplanted in grove from nursery.

An article entitled "The Avocado in Florida" appeared in the Country Gentleman under the date of April 29th, 1922, reading as follows:

"The result of these observations has been to convince Mr. Krome that future cultural practices with the avocado must include careful thinning of fruit, whenever this tendency to overbear manifests itself. This grower has taken as many as thirty-two crates of avocados from a single tree.

"From between January fifteenth and March I didn't have a sale of avocados in New York under \$32.50 a crate. I have frequently had them bring \$40.00 a crate up to the time when Central American avocados began to come in and break the market down to \$15.00."

You will see by these figures that thirty-two crates at prices received figures up to \$1,000 a tree.

Let us figure the matter another way—basing our estimates on individual trees, an acre of avocados of the best budded variety will produce at least 30,000 pounds of fruit in a year. The cost of producing this fruit is not over two cents a pound. Its selling price is say ten cents a pound, or a total of \$3,000.00.

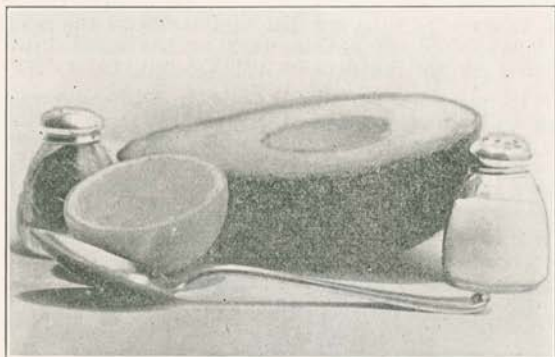
Miami, Florida, is one of the largest producing sections of the states, the fruit of which ripens mostly in late summer. The average price when the fruit is plentiful is twelve cents a pound and at that figure the daily consumption is equal to one-fourth pound per capita, being greatly in demand by all classes. As the crop disappears, the price of the budded fruit rises and the demand continues from the man of moderate means until the price reached twenty-five cents a pound. In midwinter the price goes to as high as seventy-five cents a pound and the consumption is then limited to the more prosperous classes. It is safe to say that the average consumption in Havana is more than a quarter of a pound per day during the season when they are cheap.

Should the per capita consumption in America ever reach one-fifth that of Havana, it would require 500,000 pounds a day or 1,500,000,000 pounds for 300 days of the year. This would be the product of 50,000 acres at the rate of 30,000 pounds per acre. It is not unreasonable to believe that the demand will equal this one-twentieth of a pound a day, if the price is within reason.

Most of you know what avocados are selling for today. That is, the varieties known as the budded ones. Go to any first class restaurant or hotel and call for an avocado salad. It will consist of not over half a fruit. In the larger types a quarter of a fruit. The price will be seventy-five cents to one dollar. It is not reasonable to expect that such prices will be commanded when we have thousands of acres in bearing, but I do believe that there is not going to be any serious over-production as there are only two small areas in Southern California and Florida where they can be grown. When we consider the proportions that the citrus product has reached, we have the reason to believe that the avocado, from its nourishing food value, will be of a greater value to mankind and more sought after.



## Food Value of the Avocado



**I**T IS this unique feature of the avocado—its food value—that has made firm the belief that it is to play an important part in the future of California horticulture and that it will do much towards the solution of the distressing problem of the “high cost of living.” The tendency in the United States is to eat less meat, not only because of its cost, but because it is considered harmful. Good avocados, pound for pound, will equal lean meat in food value and are much more easily assimilated. The chemical analysis brings out the fact that the ripe fruit contains from 15 to 25 per cent of vegetable fat, clearly indicating its value as a food. Prof. M. E. Jaffa, head of the division of nutrition at Berkeley, stated as a result of chemical analysis that the avocado should not be considered as a relish, but as a food which produces tissues and yields energy. In this respect it stands in a class by itself, running higher in fat or oil than the olive. The importance of this announcement cannot be overestimated. It shows that we are dealing with the most valuable food product known to man.

The claim is not made that the avocado contains in itself all the elements of a perfect food, but that it contains more of the essential elements, yielding on the average a far higher caloric value than any other fresh fruit. It should be our business to make this fact known, especially to medical journals and physicians, for it is evident that we are producing and developing a food of high nutritious value, which is likely to find itself placed in the diet not only of healthy adults but also of invalids and of the young.

David Fairchild, in charge of the Foreign Seed and Plant Introduction, Bureau of Plant Industry, United States Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C., makes the statement that he believes the day is coming when the avocado industry in Florida and California will pass the orange and lemon industry. Mr. Fairchild is looked upon by the Horticultural World as being a very conservative man. He realizes, however, the wonderful possibilities of the avocado from the standpoint of a food.



## *Methods of Cultivation*

**A**VOCADO trees are being planted from seventy-five to one hundred and eight trees to the acre. It is expected, of course, that as the trees grow older, they will have to be thinned out.

It has been repeatedly said that the avocada tree will stand all the water one can give it and the more given the better it will grow. This, however, is not true. It might apply to the tropics, where the rainfall averages about 70 inches a year, but one must take into consideration the relative humidity of the atmosphere in this section. It is



This four-year-old tree, planted and cultivated by Mrs. T. N. Hayden at Old Town, produced over \$150 worth of fruit last year.

well, however, for the first week or two after planting to give the trees a liberal supply of water every few days, after that time about every two weeks during the dry season will be sufficient. The length of time the water should run in the furrows or basins to be governed by the type of soil, as well as the lay of the land. In soils of heavy clay or where hardpan is present, it is necessary to be very cautious as over-irrigation would cause the soil to sour.

In making basins for irrigating, make a circular ditch around the tree, leaving a few inches of high ground next to the trunk. All basins should have some kind of mulch covering to keep the moisture from evaporating as well as to keep the soil from baking. In cultivating it is well to remember that the tree is inclined to make a great number of surface or near surface roots, if permitted to do so. Intelligent tilling of the soil will avert the condition mentioned above, and will encourage the roots to seek deeper levels, which is manifold in its benefits. One should aim to keep a mulch of from 3 to 6 inches in depth, depending a good deal on the type of the soil, but should not under any condition disturb roots close to the trees.

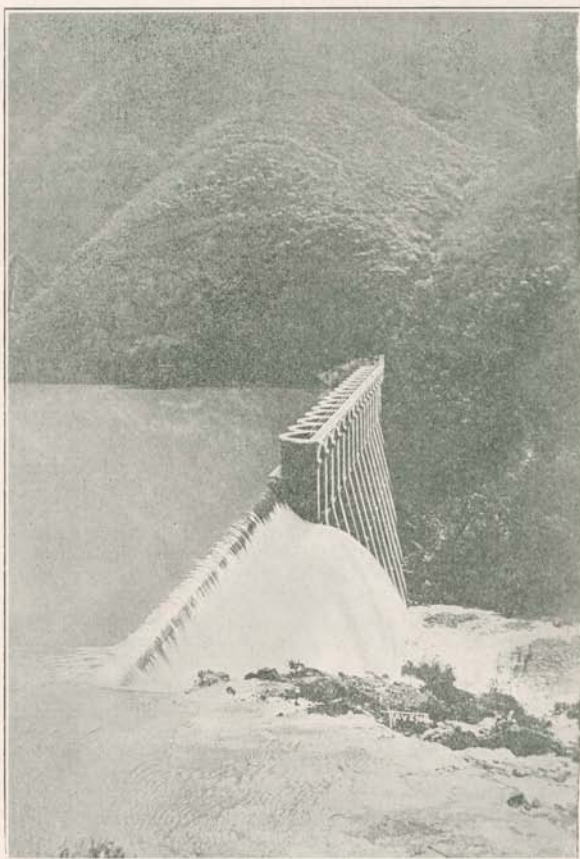
Avocado lands are limited in extent in Southern California. The climate and soil conditions are ideal for avocados at Solana Beach, Rancho Santa Fe, Encinitas, Carlsbad and along the ocean shore between Oceanside and Del Mar, in San Diego County, California, also at La Mesa, Lemon Grove and Grossmont, just east of San Diego.

These lands along the sea coast are practically frostless and can be worked every day of the year. Through proper irrigation two crops of vegetables can be raised annually and as high as \$600 to \$800 an acre is received from the sale of such vegetables as tomatoes, chili peppers, eggplant, peas, beans and summer squash from the Eastern markets, which crops mature during the months of December, January, February and March. The climate is ideal; no malaria; ideal ocean bathing, surf fishing and hunting are close at hand, and this land will soon become the finest residential section in the United States, overlooking the Pacific.



"Some day, some day," writes a professional woman in Scribner's Magazine, "I must, I will go back to the freedom and beauty of the country; now I live in the city and earn money that in the future I may live out of the city. Do I not know that thousands of city-doomed dream this dream, thousands who will never realize it? Let us hope there will be country life in Heaven."

## Lake Hodges, where Solana Beach Gets Its Water Supply



Colonel Ed Fletcher has made as his life work the development of water and applying of same to the land. As President of the San Dieguito Mutual Water Company, owned by the Santa Fe Railway, Colonel Fletcher was instrumental in making it possible to irrigate 15,000 acres of land between Del Mar and Oceanside. He has also been a factor in the development of the San Diego County Water Co. through the acquisition of many damsites and the building of Henshaw dam, as well as part owner in the Cuyamaca Water Company, which furnishes water to all the territory east of San Diego.

The Ed Fletcher Company owns Solana Beach, Avocado Acres and large tracts of irrigated land along the coast between Del Mar and Oceanside. They can furnish intending purchasers any tract of land desired on easy terms, whether it be a lot in Solana Beach, an acre in Avocado Acres, a ten-acre farm or large tracts of land for development purposes.

For further information and literature write Ed Fletcher Company, San Diego, California.