

44439. *PERSEA AMERICANA* Mill. Lauracææ.

Avocado.

*(P. gratissima* Gaertn. f.)

From Guatemala. Budwood collected by Mr. Wilson Popenoe, Agricultural Explorer for the Department of Agriculture. Received January to March, 1917.

"(No. 92. Avocado No. 15.) *Nabal*.<sup>1</sup> For productiveness combined with desirable form and excellent quality of fruit, this variety seems particularly worthy of trial in the United States. While not a large avocado, it is excellent in every way, having a smooth green surface, rich yellow flesh of good flavor, and a seed not unduly large in comparison to the size of the fruit. In addition, it seems to be slightly earlier in season than the average.

"The parent tree was accidentally destroyed in June, 1917, by a laborer who was planting coffee. It stood among coffee bushes in the Finca Santa Lucia, 7a Calle Poniente, near the Alameda de Santa Lucia, Antigua, Guatemala. The soil in this finca is a rich, black, sandy loam of volcanic origin, deep and apparently very fertile. The tree was young, probably not more than 6 or 7 years old. It stood about 25 feet high, with a trunk 6 inches in diameter at the base, branching 10 feet from the ground. The crown was open, scantily branched, with little bearing wood. The young growths were strong, stout, vigorous, and the budwood was excellent, having large, vigorous eyes. The variety should not be difficult to propagate, and the indications are that it will be a good grower, though it is impossible to speak with certainty in regard to this latter point. The wood is rather tough for an avocado.

"The elevation of Antigua, 5,100 feet, is not great enough to insure unusual hardiness in a variety, but it seems reasonable to expect that varieties from this elevation will be as hardy as the average of the Guatemalan race. There is no way of determining whether they are hardier than the average until they are tested in the United States.

"The parent tree did not flower in 1917. Since flowers are nearly always produced at the same time as the spring flush of growth, however, it may be suspected that the flowering season of the variety will be rather late, since the spring growth did not appear this season until the end of March. The heavy crop of fruit produced last year probably prevented the tree from flowering this season. When first examined, in October, 1916, the tree was carrying more than 300 fruits. It ripened this crop—an unusually large one for a tree of such small size, when the size of the fruit is considered—in February and March, 1917, at which time they were all picked. They would probably have remained on the tree until June if they had been allowed to do so.

"The fruit is nearly spherical in form, of convenient size for serving a half fruit as a portion. It weighs 10 ounces or a little more. The surface is smooth, bright green, very attractive in appearance. The skin is sufficiently thick to make the fruit a good shipper and is of the characteristic Guatemalan texture. The flesh is rich yellow in color, quite free from fiber or discoloration, and very rich in flavor. The seed is tight in the cavity and slightly below the average in size. Considered from all points of view, it bears every indication of being an excellent little fruit.

"A formal description of the variety follows:

<sup>1</sup> This and other varietal names for Mr. Popenoe's Guatemalan avocados are arbitrarily selected from appropriate words in the Maya language. It has seemed wiser thus to give these plants names which would indicate the origin of the variety than to give them English names that could convey no hint of the source whence the plants had come.