

baked and eaten as a vegetable, seems not to have spread very widely through the Tropics. The introduction of cuttings (No. 31378) may therefore stimulate an interest in this tree, which has so much of tropical romance connected with it.

Ten varieties of tropical yams (*Dioscorea* spp., Nos. 31914 to 31923) from Port Moresby, New Guinea, may add some valuable strains to the collections of West Indian forms; two interesting mangos from Tahiti (Nos. 31379 and 31380) are added to the hundred or so varieties which compose the Florida collections.

Mr. Piper calls attention to the uses of the Nipa palm as a plant for trial in the brackish swamps of southern Florida (No. 31556) and reports on the quality of the fruit of the wampee from Canton, China (No. 31730), which, while it is one of the commonest fruits of South China, is little known in Florida or Porto Rico. The cajuput tree of New South Wales (No. 31736) has made a remarkable growth on the shores of Florida and promises to be a most valuable tree for that region, and the further introduction of seed will be of interest to those who are studying the forest problems of that State.

The lacquer tree of China and Japan is a relative of our poison ivy and is quite as poisonous to some people, but the remarkable character of the sap, which is different from the paint oils or varnishes in use in this country, makes its culture worthy of the consideration of chemists. The drying process is not a simple oxidation phenomenon, but it depends on the action of enzymes upon albuminoids in the presence of an organic acid, and, as the product, lacquer, is one of the most durable and perfect wood coatings known, it would seem worth while to find ways by which it can be handled by painters. The introduction of the crude lacquer and seeds of the lacquer tree (No. 31639) are for the purpose of interesting the paint and varnish makers of this country.

The extensive employment in India of the juice of a certain tropical persimmon, when mixed with charcoal, as a coating for the planks of boats has made it seem worth while to add this species to our collection of *Diospyros* (No. 31488).

To those who wish to test new forms in their gardens, the narras from Walfisch Bay, a dune-forming, thorny cucurbitaceous plant (No. 31401) which produces fruits upon which the Hottentots live and thick nutlike seeds which are used in South Africa as a substitute for almonds, will perhaps be of interest; or one of Mr. Piper's introductions from the Philippines, a vine with beautiful globose smooth red fruits as large as an orange (No. 31588); or the pacuri of Paraguay, a plant as frost resistant as the orange, which bears edible fruit (No. 31872).