

## Planting and Culture.

"The Guatemalan Indians plant the chayote in early spring or even in winter (January and February in Santa Maria, March at Coban) and harvest a crop the following October to December. The vines are not perennial, but die down every winter, usually about the month of January. It is evident that this takes place whether they are subjected to frost or not; though it is equally evident that different plants show different times of maturity and death of the tops. At Santa Maria, in the month of February, most of the chayote arbors were covered with dead leaves, and new green sprouts were just pushing up from the roots; at the same time, however, there were a few vines which were in growth and were bearing fruits. Whether or not this difference is due to variation of the time of sowing cannot be ascertained at present.

"In this connection, there is a custom at Santa Maria which is worthy of passing notice. Upon the advent of winter, and the consequent possibility of frost which might kill the chayote vines, the Indians place upon the top of the arbor a dish which has been dipped in lime, the theory being that the lime will give off heat and protect the vines from cold.

"Little preparation is made for planting. A hole 8 or 10 inches deep is prepared to receive the chayote which should already have commenced to sprout, and the fruit is then laid upon its side in the hole and covered with 4 or 5 inches of soil. In heavy soil it must not be planted so deeply, but in the friable volcanic loam of Santa Maria the young sprout seems able to make its way to the surface through 7 or 8 inches of soil without difficulty.

"After planting, it is usually necessary to protect the seed from hogs; hence a circular barrier about 18 inches in diameter is made of small sticks, set into the ground 7 or 8 inches, and placed so close to one another that a hand cannot be slipped between them. This barrier is usually 4 or 5 feet high. When the first shoot makes its appearance, several small twigs are stuck into the ground close beside it, for it to climb upon. When it reaches the tops of these twigs and the height of the circular barrier it is ready to spread out upon the 'tapezca' or arbor.

"For convenience in gathering the fruit, chayote arbors are usually arranged in the following manner: Uprights, 4 to 6 feet in height, are set in the ground