

The Mayas particularly excelled in architecture and art, and they were the only race in the new world to develop a written language. Of their numerous deities, Itzamna, the creator of mankind, was held to be the chief, and Yum Kaax, the Maize God, who is portrayed as having for his headdress a sprouting ear of corn surrounded by leaves, symbolic of growth, may well be called the god of agriculture.

From the ancient Maya stock have sprung the twenty or more tribes which today occupy Guatemala. They are agricultural peoples, intelligent and industrious. The avocado is one of their favorite foods, and is called, in various dialects, *oh*, *okh*, *un*, *on*, and so forth.

In selecting the names for the varieties introduced into the United States from Guatemala, an effort was made to choose words which would not be unreasonably difficult of pronunciation, and which would, in as many cases as possible, have appropriate meanings. Several were named for Maya deities; one for an Indian who assisted in the work of introducing them; and in half a dozen instances, appropriate names were chosen from the Kekchí dialect of the Alta Vera Paz, an important avocado-growing region of northern Guatemala. Below is the list, with a word of explanation concerning the derivation of each name:

ITZAMNA (No. 2), S.P.I. No 55736. Named for the chief deity of the Maya Pantheon. Itzamna was considered the father of all other gods, and the creator of mankind. He was the founder of the Maya civilization, the inventor of writing and books, and the great healer.

LAMAT (No. 3), S.P.I. No. 43476. This name is that of one of the twenty days of the Maya calendar. The hieroglyph which represents it shows, presumably, the setting sun. It is also connected with the planet Venus in some way.

KANOLA (No. 6), S.P.I. No. 43560. This word is used in the Kekchí language of northern Guatemala to mean "sweetheart." It may not be of Maya origin.

ISHKAL (No. 7), S.P.I. No. 43602. Kekchí word, meaning "little girl." The avocado was so named because it was obtained through the aid of an Indian girl; it might be termed "the little girl's avocado."

COBAN (No. 8), S.P.I. No. 43932. Named for the town of Coban, capital of the department of Alta Vera Paz in northern Guatemala, where the parent tree is growing. Coban is one of the most important Indian towns of Guatemala.

KASHLAN (No. 10), S.P.I. No. 43934. A Kekchí word