

1977

Kansu and its yield has been much greater, I was told, than the native varieties. The head is somewhat triangular, being broad at the base. This variety is now growing in a very limited area at an altitude of about 7,000 feet, and is sown either in the spring or fall."

### An Avocado from the Republic of Colombia.

The region about Santa Marta, Colombia, produces many fine avocados (*Persea americana*) of the West Indian race. The trees are not cultivated as in Florida, but occur here and there in banana plantations and dooryards. Because of the extremely hot climate, the fruits ripen some weeks earlier than they do in the West Indies. This has resulted in shipments from Santa Marta being the first to reach American markets at the beginning of the avocado season. Sometimes they have arrived in New York during the month of May, though it is doubtful if avocados picked at that time are fully mature.

While past experience shows that it is impossible to forecast the behavior of an avocado, when it is taken from one region to another, the possibility of securing early-ripening varieties of the West Indian race from Santa Marta has long been under consideration. No one has been able to say definitely that the earliness of most varieties in that region is due solely to climate, though personally I feel this to be the major factor, and perhaps the only one of importance.

While studying the avocados of that region in August, 1920, I came across a tree which was said to be unusually valuable. It was growing in the dooryard of the superintendent's house at Esperanza Farm of the United Fruit Co., near Rio Frio. My notes made at the time are reproduced below:

"This tree flowers in December. Fruit begins to ripen in April, being the first to mature of the varieties hereabout. The main crop is in April, May, and June, but a few fruits may remain on the tree until August. Sometimes the tree flowers a second time, and ripens 20 to 30 fruits in December. It is a good bearer, yielding at least 500 avocados annually.

"The fruit is oblong-oval in form, and weighs about a pound and a half. The surface is light yellow green, marked with numerous small yellowish dots. The skin is firm and moderately thick, and the flesh buttery, fine-grained, deep yellow (tinged with green near the skin), without any trace of fiber or discoloration, and of rich, very pleasant flavor. The proportion of flesh to seed is much larger than is common, the flesh being about an inch thick on the sides of the fruit. The seed is small, and quite loose in the seed cavity, which also is small."

The variety, when introduced into the United States, was given the name Fernandez, in honor of Joaquin B. Fernandez, at that time manager of the Santa Marta Division of the United Fruit Company. Young trees propagated at Washington have been sent to Florida, where they are making