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The Hunt Institute for Botanical Documentation, a research division of Carnegie Mellon University, specializes in the history of botany and all aspects of plant science and serves the international scientific community through research and documentation. To this end, the Institute acquires and maintains authoritative collections of books, plant images, manuscripts, portraits and data files, and provides publications and other modes of information service. The Institute meets the reference needs of botanists, biologists, historians, conservationists, librarians, bibliographers and the public at large, especially those concerned with any aspect of the North American flora.

Hunt Institute was dedicated in 1961 as the Rachel McMasters Miller Hunt Botanical Library, an international center for bibliographical research and service in the interests of botany and horticulture, as well as a center for the study of all aspects of the history of the plant sciences. By 1971 the Library's activities had so diversified that the name was changed to Hunt Institute for Botanical Documentation. Growth in collections and research projects led to the establishment of four programmatic departments: Archives, Art, Bibliography and the Library.

DAIRA DRANEHT

25, RUE TALAAT HARB

دائرة درانیت

٢٥ شارع طلعت حرب

ADRESSE TÉLÉGRAPHIQUE : "DRANEHT" ALEXANDRIE

TÉLÉPHONE 21581 تلفون نمرة ٢١٥٨١

B. P. 1277 صندوق پوست ١٢٧٧

Alexandrie, le 16th. April 1959.

EGYPTE

Dear Doctor Popenoe,

About a month ago I received a letter from Mrs. Cheshire in which she tells me she had the pleasure of visiting you in Antigua. I believe she has since left on a trip to Europe as I have not yet received an answer to my last letter. In her above mentioned letter she assured me you would be writing to me soon but she conveyed, however, your fears that maybe I was not serious about the project of importing new varieties of avocado cuttings for the purpose of shield-budding, eventually making them thrive and popular on the Egyptian market. I can assure you I am very keen indeed and would be greatly disappointed if the project fell through.

We have the appropriate land, an ideal climate, the best of gardeners and grafting specialists and all that is required to make a succes of this plan.

In order to boost the idea with my collaborators I have myself painstakingly translated the first 78 pages of your excellent manual for them to read and learn.

In a way I am rather relieved that you have not yet written to me as I would hate to make a nuisance of myself by taking too much of your precious time, too often. To my previous letter of February 14th. to you, may I add a few more questions, therefore?

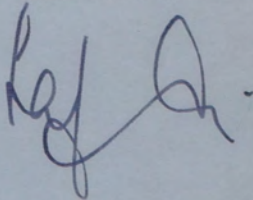
- 1) Since your writing of the Manual in 1919 is there anything that has been learnt since about avocados, to alter ~~##~~ in any way your findings of some two score years ago? Especially in what concerns fertilizers, irrigation and pruning.
- 2) my aim being to start with a 500 nursery of seedlings in August 1959 to begin with, I should like to hear from you how to proceed, from the very start, and please do not spare any details which might seem trivial or unnecessary as the more they are rubbed in by an expert from abroad, the better I will get my people to follow them closely. The crop of our seedling avocados, which I should imagine are mostly Mexican (small, thin skin and very dark in colour), starts in July right through to September. Are we to follow the manual in its every detail regarding propagation?
- 3) Providing that by following your instructions all goes well with the young stock plants, when will cuttings be ready to be flown out to Egypt? Will the favourable season for obtaining the cuttings in Guatemala coincide with the favourable season for budding in Egypt, and

when the time comes for you to send me the cuttings, will my stock plants be ready to receive them? I am sure you are better placed than I am to solve this important problem. I will naturally be glad to answer all queries you may want to make.

In the hope of hearing from you soon, I wish again to assure you that whatever advice you give, I will see, is followed with meticulous care.

Believe me, yours very truly

L.E. Zervudachi

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be 'L.E. Zervudachi', written in a cursive style. The signature is positioned below the typed name.

Antigua, Guatemala, 26 April 1959

Mr L E Zervudachi
Daira Draheht
25 rue Talast Harb, Alexandria, Egypt.

Dear Mr Zervudachi:

Your letter of the 16th April has just reached me. I am sorry not to have written you earlier. Mrs Cheshire, a very fine person, assured me that you are seriously interested in developing avocados in Egypt. I, on my part, assured that I would be glad to help, but that I must know, before spending too much time and energy on the matter, that you are prepared to produce good nursery stock. It is quite a job to assemble scions or budwood of the varieties you ought to have, and dispatch the material by airmail; but this is, I fear, what we shall have to do. I do not suppose there is the slightest chance that you can get material from Israel, is there? Dr Chanan Oppenheimer at Rehovot has practically all the varieties you need, but paraphrasing the Scriptures, I suspect it would be easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye than for you to get material from Israel. Am I correct about this? Nothing would please me more than to find out that I am wrong.

I feel sure you have, as you say, appropriate land and climate for avocados - providing you choose the right varieties. As for methods of propagation, we are presently depending on two: shield budding of the kind used for Citrus, and veneer grafting, which takes more material (scions instead of buds) but is more nearly fool-proof and this is not saying that you people are fools! The point is that during 1958 when I worked in southern Spain, and also saw what is being done in Israel and the Canary Islands, I came to feel that veneer grafting is good.

You ask if there any new developments in avocado culture since I wrote me Manual in 1919. The answer is YES, in fact most everything has changed. Just to mention a few things: we have learned that we must keep avocados off of heavy, insufficiently drained soils - and I might even further and just say, keep them off of very heavy soils. Propagation has improved with the use of the veneer graft. As for fertilizers, not much change; Dont use too much nitrogen. On alluvial soils not much fertilizer at all. I would say in general, fertilization which experience has shown to be good for Citrus is about what I would use for avocados. As for irrigation, the same applies in general. One can't lay down hard and fast rules; one has to watch his trees and listen to what they say. As for pruning, our policy now in California and Florida is about the same as that of Punch to those about to get maffied "DONT". From the start, form a good well-branched crown. Cut out dead wood and badly-shaped branches as you go along; do not prune up from the ground. When a friend asked me at our school in Honduras, "Why dont you cut off the lower branches so you can walk under the trees?" I replied "I dont want to walk under the trees, I want to stand outside and pick fruit from those lower branches."

Many branches, for example Fuerte, which today constitutes more than 50% of the world's commercial avocado production (I feel sure) tends to grow low and spreading; you should not attempt to change its habits. On the other hand, Hass, which is rapidly gaining importance in California, is tall and slender. You can't make it grow low and spreading, like Fuerte, by any amount of pruning.

Mrs. Cheshire said that you are planning to start with a nursery of about 500 seedlings. I do not know what kind of seedlings you plan to use - or can obtain. Based on my observations of last year around the Mediterranean, I would favor seedlings of the West Indian race, if you can get them. I don't know just what you have available in Egypt. I would avoid seedlings of pure Guatemalan blood. I would use hybrids and if necessary Mexican seedlings, but by all means West Indians of hybrid descent. Maybe you can tell me what material you have available. I would have liked to visit Egypt last summer, when I went to Israel, but I was given to understand that I could not possibly get a visa to do so, if I had been in Israel, and I had an official commitment to go to Israel; and I gathered from my son, who had recently gone through Egypt, that an American was just about as popular there as a snake at a Sunday School picnic. I hope to go back to the Mediterranean again in 1960; maybe it will then be practical for me to visit Egypt. You and I as horticulturists regret these political problems but there is not much we can do.

But to get off the unpleasant features and talk horticulture: Your only big problem is to have a nursery of fine strong vigorous seedlings full of sap; if you have these you can graft or bud them successfully. I think I am safe in saying that 90% of the failures I have seen in the last 50 years have been due to using seedlings which were not vigorous and full of sap. So what I told Mrs. Cheshire is what I want to emphasize: Once you have a nursery in the right condition, and it may be West Indian seedlings or Mexican of whatever you can get, I shall be glad to help you by sending - or having sent - some propagating material. Now, this is going to be quite a job. And that is why I want to make sure things are in the best possible shape at your end. As for varieties, we can lean on the experience in Israel up to a certain point, but they have leaned rather too heavily on California, I believe - probably because so many of their men have studied at the University of California and so few in Florida. Right now the commercial planting of avocados in Israel is based mainly on the following to which I add my comments: Fuerte, the leader, and I believe it should be. For resistance to cold, for long season of ripening, for excellent quality, it is hard to beat. Last month in California I told my old friends: "This is a curious situation. The first Fuertes to be propagated in this world were grafted by me in 1911. Ever since then we have come together in these annual meetings are argued about Fuerte. It is not a regular producer. And then we go home and most of us plant more Fuertes."

Next to Fuerte I believe you should try Hass. But returning to experience in Israel, their list is about as follows in order of importance: Fuerte, Ettinger (a local seedling of Fuerte, said to be about 6 weeks earlier and about as good); Nabal (one of my

Guatemalan introductions back in 1917 - the parent tree grew in a coffee plantation, less than a mile from our house where I write these lines; then Benik, another of my Guatemalans, and then Anaheim, a Guatemalan variety of California origin, a good producer but not of really good quality. The planting program in Israel has been based to a large extent on what they introduced first and had available. Without knowing Egypt I would suggest that we try to get you started with the following:

From California, Fuerte and Hass, also Wabal, mentioned above. From Florida: Lula (the leading commercial variety in that State) Simmonds, the best (in my estimation) of the summer-bearing West Indian varieties; Booth No. 8, a Guatemalan x West Indian like Lula; and perhaps Gottfried, either a Mexican or a Mex x West Indian hybrid.

If and when you want to go in for testing a considerable range of varieties, we can name what are today the most promising ones, for example, Bacon, Rincon and Zutano from California.

You ask about the favorable season for grafting or budding. I can not say just what this may be in Egypt, but in California, where we only have 12 or 15 inches of rain during the year, we graft at almost any time, though I would prefer June or July. In Spain we thought June about the best season; I noticed they were grafting in Israel about that same time. I think we can get you propagating material at almost any time of the year, and we had no trouble in receiving it in Spain last year, when wrapped in polyethylene and shipped by first class air mail just like a letter. It cost us about five dollars U.S. to get an envelop with five varieties of scions, perhaps 4 or 5 scions of each variety. This is pretty cheap, when you consider what the introduction of a new avocado may mean.

I am going down to Venezuela in a couple of weeks, to help develop a fruit improvement program. From there I go to Costa Rica to take part in the meetings of the American Society for Horticultural Science. Then back here for a short time, then to Mexico for the first week in July, to give a series of lectures on tropical fruits. I think the next step, on your side, is to build up a stock of 500 seedlings, the best you can get, feed them and water them (and they can either be in pots or in the nursery, rows 3 inches apart, plants 18 inches apart in the row. And whenever they are ready for grafting, with stems slightly thicker than a lead pencil, I will try to send or have sent through my friends elsewhere - the necessary material. And in the meantime, if you don't have the new bulletin from Florida, write Dr. George D. Ruehle, In Charge, Subtropical Experiment Station, Homestead, Florida, for Bulletin 602, "The Florida Avocado Industry". And at the same time you might as well ask him for their recent bulletin on mango culture. I am sure he will be glad to send them.

Sincerely,

Wilson Popenoe

L.E. Zervudachi
Daira Draneht
POB 1277
25, r. Talaat Harb
Alexandria,

22nd. May 1959.

Dr. Wilson Popenoe
Antigua
Guatemala.

Dear Doctor Popenoe,

This is to acknowledge your kind letter of April 26th. and to thank you for all the interesting news it contains about avocados.

Your letter, being registered, was opened by the local Censorship, was therefore slightly delayed but reached me unscathed.

I hope your travels are proving succesful in every way, I'll avoid pestering for the time being and all the information you gave me allows me to carry on until the nursery will be ready to receive the scions, about this time next year, I trust.

It would indeed be beneficial to this country if you could visit us as you did Spain and elsewhere and I hope this, as you suggest, might be possible in the near future.

Some time ago I had explored the possibility of obtaining avocado scions from neighbouring Mediterranean countries but to no avail as they were loth, to a certain extent understandably, to part with precious material, to then be rivaled by unfriendly competitors. As you rightly say, it is best to keep off these thorny questions and go on hoping that the day will come when hatred will make place to harmony!!

On your advice I have written to Doctor Ruehle for the bulletins you mentioned and asked if some literature existed describing veneer grafting in detail, as we are not familiar with the word and it may be known here under another name, I suspect it may be one of the following:



The score or so Fuerte which are in their sixth and seventh years of growth flowered very abundantly this year but an exceedingly low percentage of fruit is appearing. Is this normal and should one wait till later for more promising average crops? Or could it be that we used too much fertilizer? I trust the bulletin I am about to receive will enlighten me on some of these problems.

I am about to spend a few weeks in Italy until July, my address there is: la Darsena, Oggebbio, Lago Maggiore, Pro. Novara, should you wish to drop me a line while I am absent from Egypt.

Yours sincerely

L. E. Zervudachi
L.E. Zervudachi.

LAKY ZERVUDACHI

Alexandria, 7th. May 1960.

Dr. Wilson Popenoe
Antigua
Guatemala.

Dear Dr. Popenoe,

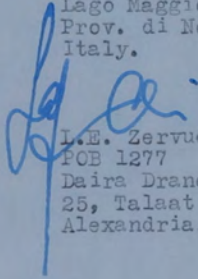
As both my letters of 22nd. March and 16th. April have remained unanswered I take it that you must have been absent from Antigua these last two months.

I am leaving myself for Europe in a couple of days so I think it is better for the time being to give up the idea of sending avocado scions this year. By February 1961 my nursery of av. stock will be better prepared for grafting so I suggest we put it off definitely till then. The number of scions required then will be in the vicinity of one thousand; with this in mind, could you please have in mind a program of varieties you could send me and suggestions as to actual dispatch. I still think a trial dispatch of up to 50 scions could be attempted in August of this year. This will give us an idea as to future behaviour of customs at the receiving end.

In case you should want to correspond with me in Europe my house address is the following: Ia Darsena

Oggebbio
Iago Maggiore
Prov. di Novara
Italy.

Yours very truly



L.E. Zervudachi
POB 1277
Daira Draneht
25, Talaat Harb
Alexandria.

Antigua, Guatemala, 15 May 1960

Dear Doctor Zafvudachi:

Your letter of 7th May has just come, following one of 7th April from Mrs Cheshire in Bogotá.

I note that you now feel you will not be ready to graft avocados on an extensive scale before February of next year. This is all the better, and I like your idea of trying about 50 scions in August to see how the grafting techniques which we use will work in Egypt. I would strongly urge you to try both the veneer graft and shield budding, the latter because it requires so much less material. You mention a nursery of a thousand trees. I do not know that we can get this much material, of the right varieties, in Central America. You could get some in Florida, but they do not have all the varieties you want. And if you are going to work in quantity, you must get things lined up at that end so there will not be more than two or three days delay after the material reaches Egypt by airplane. There are so many formalities! Both from here and from Florida, the so-called Inspection Certificates can be furnished, but several countries (and I suspect Egypt might be done) do not accept Inspection Certificates, and tie up the material until it can be inspected by their own technicians.

I assume you have received and read George Ruehle's bulletin 602, from Florida. This is a good publication, up to date; but I think for climates as dry as yours his side-graft as shown on page 31 leaves far too much of the scion exposed to the dry atmosphere. The side graft is to all intents and purposes the same as our veneer graft, but we barely leave the tip of the scion exposed, just enough so it can break into growth. One of our greatest sources of failure in past years, both with avocados and mangos, was leaving two inches of the scion exposed. I think shield budding may work pretty well with you, if you have the right kind of budwood and stocks in very vigorous condition.

As for varieties, you might do well to consult my article in the 1959 Yearbook of the California Avocado Society (if you are not a member, by all means join immediately; 4833 Everett Avenue, Los Angeles 58, California). Page 55 et seq I have a lengthy paper on "Avocados in Spain and Elsewhere" which will give you pretty complete information on avocados in Israel - perhaps more than you can obtain direct. You will note that Fuerte is still going strong in that country, also Nabal. I would not play with Anaheim nor Benik. I would plant quite a lot of Mayapan (if you can get it) and Panchoy (ditto) and one or two of the Florida hybrids, especially Booth No. 8. You will have quite a job getting enough propagating material of all these varieties. You mention Fuerte's annoying bearing habits; this is in large part a matter of climate but from the fact that Fuerte is still tops in Israel I think you should not chuck it overboard as yet, though I am really not happy about it.

Sincerely,

Wilson Popenoe

cc Mrs C C Cheshire

P.S. In mailing envelopes please have the following address inscribed:
Mr. L.E. Zervudachi, c/o P. Zervudachi & Co., 11, rue El Miniawi, Gamrah, CAIRO.

LAKY ZERVUDACHI
Daira Draneht, POB 1277, 25, Talaat Harb,

Alexandria, 2nd. July 1960.

Doctor Wilson Popenoe
Antigua
Guatemala.

Dear Doctor Popenoe,

I thank you for your letter of May 15th. which reached me while I was still in Europe

Since my return to this country and a visit to the farm and avocado nursery I was able to ascertain that about 125 pencil-thick avocado stock are ready for grafting this next August. They are in vigorous condition.

I agree with you that shield budding is probably the more appropriate for this country, though I feel we should also try veneer grafting. August and September are our very damp months followed by late fall and winter rains, through February.

I thank you for giving me the tip about the California avocado society, I have written in order to join and have asked them to mail me your paper on "avocados in Spain and elsewhere".

Now, about our next months' grafting, there is no time to attempt getting propagating material from Florida. but as you kindly suggested in your letter of 26 April of last year, and in order to find out how things develop in view of a more important shipment in February, I would be pleased if you could send me, now, up to 125 scions, to reach me early in August. And I would suggest 100 shield buds and 25 veneer scions.

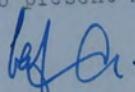
Going through your a.m. letter it would seem that 5 or 6 envelopes containing 20-25 scions each sent by first class air-mail would do the trick. Naturally the person whom you will kindly instruct to do the mailing will have to find out the dates of departure of the K.L.M. planes on a direct routing to Cairo, and I suggest the envelopes are sent at regular intervals thus not forming a too conspicuous shipment.

As to varieties I leave entirely to your judgment to choose from local or other races on the spot. If any of Nabal, Hass, Booth 8, Mayapan or Panchoy, all the better.

While in Europe I searched in vain for rubber budding strips but neither in England, Switzerland, France or Italy was any to be found. If available in Guatemala could you please have some sent to me, a sufficient length for sampling during our next graftings.

I am sending a copy of my letter to Mrs. Cheshire so please contact her as she very kindly wishes to present me with these envelopes from Guatemala.

Sincerely yours



LAKY ZERVUDACHI

Alexandria, 30th. July 1960.

Doctor Wilson Popence
Antigua
Guatemala.

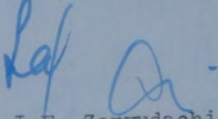
Dear Doctor Popence,

I was able this morning to obtain the entry permit from the Ministry of Agriculture for 200 scions or buds of avocado.

I am following up my letter to you of yesterday to inform you therefore that the amounts of scions or buds to be mailed can reach 200. The ministerial expert seemed to think there would not be any difficulty in receiving the material and he himself suggested to increase the amount in order to allow for failures in grafting.

The permit is made out for the varieties mentioned to you yesterday, i.e. Panchoy, Nabal, Booth 8, Mayapan and Hass. It would be wise to have these names mentioned on the lots and at the same time numbering each variety from 1 to 5. Any corrections can be made afterwards by yourself when referring to these numbers, in a letter to me.

Yours sincerely


L.E. Zervudachi
POB 1277
Daira Draneht
25, Talaat Harb
Alexandria.

Forwarding address for scions to:
L.E. Zervudachi
c/o P. Zervudachi & Co.
11, Rue El Miniawi
Gamrah
Cairo.

1) Import by gift of approximately 125 scions or buds as grafting material from Guatemala.

2) do. sample of rubber strip for grafting.

Persons making the gift: Mr. & Mrs. Cheshire and Doctor W. Popence of Antigua Guatemala, Central America.

Forwarding Agent: unknown, probably Jorge Benitez, SCIDA, Guatemala City

Growers: Ministerio de Agricultura, Guatemala City.

Origin of material to be imported: Guatemala

Name of tree and varieties: AVOCADO PEAR : Panchoy approx. 25
Nabal " "
Booth 8 " "
Mayapan " "
Another " "

By five or six envelopes sent by first-class air-mail probably KIM.

Airport of departure: "La Aurora", Guatemala City, Guatemala, C.A.

Date of shipping: During August-September 1960.

Address : L. Zervudachi, c/o P. Zervudachi & Co., 11, rue El Miniawi, Gamrah
===== Cairo.

LAKY ZERVUDACHI

Alexandria, 29th. July 1960.

Doctor Wilson Popenoe
Antigua
Guatemala.

Dear Doctor Popenoe,

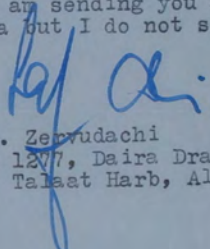
Though I have not heard from you, on the off-chance that you may soon be having the scions sent to me, as per my letter of July 2nd., will you please see that each envelope, or one sent me a bit in advance contain an Inspection Certificate stating that the trees from which buds or scions were removed were free from diseases, etc.

If it is to be one single certificate sent ahead of the first envelope it will have to mention the number of scions and varieties but of course it would be wiser sending a copy with each envelope.

I have been told the above procedure is necessary to facilitate the chance of my getting them speedily through Customs and Agricultural Office.

The lack of time, should the grafting material be about to be mailed, made ^{me} obtain a permit of importation, just in case the material is to be investigated. I am sending you a copy which is sketchy as I hav'nt got all the data but I do not suppose it matters much at this end.

Yours sincerely


L.E. Zervudachi
POB 1277, Daira Draneht
25, Talaat Harb, Alexandria.

Envelopes to be mailed to: L.E. Zervudachi
c/o P. Zervudachi & Co.
11, rue El Miniawi
Ghamrah, Cairo.

August 3, 1960

L. E. Zervudachi
Daira Draneht
POB 1277
25, Talaat Harb
Alexandria, Egypt

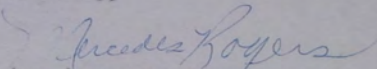
Dear Mr. Zervudachi:

We shall be very pleased to welcome you as a member of the California Avocado Society, and appreciate Dr. Popenoe mentioning the Society to you.

Dues in the Society are \$6.00 a year and each member is mailed a Yearbook at no further cost. The 1960 Yearbook will be ready for distribution this fall. For your convenience, we are enclosing a membership application blank.

Many thanks for your interest.

Sincerely,


(Mrs.) Mercedes Rogers
Secretary

/m

cc: Dr. Popenoe.

P. S. The price of the 1959 Yearbook, containing Doctor Popenoe's article, is priced at \$3.50. We shall be glad to forward you a copy upon receipt of your remittance. m

LAKY ZERVUDACHI

Alexandria, 16th. August 1960.

Dr. Wilson Popenoe
Antigua
Guatemala.

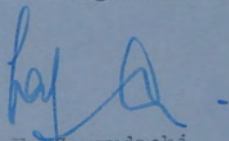
Dear Doctor Popenoe,

I have been advised that owing to present delays in local postal arrangements and censorship it will be much wiser to send envelopes containing buds by air freight KLM, rather than by first class mail. I have approached KLMs' in Cairo who have assured me that all urgency would be shown by the company to dispatch and to follow the package or packages in transit and on arrival in order that I receive them in good order. Whereas by airmail postage the envelopes might be delayed for days, weeks or months!

I still have not heard from you but imagine you have probably been absent from Guatemala on one of your interesting journeys.

Have you by chance any information on the South African avocados? I understand they have wonderful varieties and are a very popular fruit ~~here~~. Have they their origine also in Mexico and Guatemala or are they different species?

Yours sincerely



L.E. Zervudachi
c/o P. Zervudachi & Co.
11, Sh. El Miniawi
Ghamra
Cairo.

LAKY ZERVUDACHI

REGISTERED

Doctor Wilson Popenoe
Antigua
Guatemala.

Alexandria, 19th. September 1960

Dear Doctor Popenoe,

I wish to thank you for the grafting material you sent me. Unfortunately it never reached me.

The guarantinary authorities seized the material and sent me a report declaring that it contained parasites unknown in this country, they gave it a name:"Diaspis"!!

You will remember that in a previous letter to you I feared this sort of thing would happen and grower friends here warned me that, however immune of parasites, the material would be stopped anyway, on some excuse or other.

As you know there are more than ten years I have been wanting to propagate avocados in this country and I really imagined that with your precious advice, and co-operation with the grafting material for new varieties, I was about to succeed in getting a start.

I think it is useless to continue trying but I'm sorry that your efforts and mine and the kindness of the Cheshires, was to no avail.

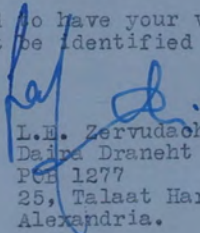
I am not going to waste your time or mine anymore and naturally the order I meant to put through for about one thousand buds and scions, this coming spring, has to fall through.

I will use my stock to graft with Fuerte. The only summer variety in this country, the Duke, of which I have a couple of hundred trees, produces a good fruit but it has no lasting qualities and therefore not fit for export.

I'm afraid, not only will we ever catch up with the countries in and around Europe which you have provided abundantly in the past with grafting material from Central America and Florida, but by the time we fill the gap, judging by the fine varieties these countries are already sending all the year round to England, France, Germany and Switzerland and probably other countries I have not visited, the markets in ten years time will be saturated and we will have worked for nothing.

I shall be very interested to have your views on the parasite which thrives in Guatemala but cannot be identified locally.

Yours sincerely,


L.E. Zervudachi
Daiba Draneht
POB 1277
25, Talaat Harb
Alexandria.

Doctor Wilson Popenoe
Antigua
Guatemala.

Alexandria, 19th. September 1960

Dear Doctor Popenoe,

I wish to thank you for the grafting material you sent me. Unfortunately it never reached me.

The quarantary authorities seized the material and sent me a report declaring that it contained parasites unknown in this country, they gave it a name: "Diaspis"!!

You will remember that in a previous letter to you I feared this sort of thing would happen and grower friends here warned me that, however immune of parasites, the material would be stopped anyway, on some excuse or other.

As you know there are more than ten years I have been wanting to propagate avocados in this country and I really imagined that with your precious advice, and co-operation with the grafting material for new varieties, I was about to succeed in getting a start.

I think it is useless to continue trying but I'm sorry that your efforts and mine and the kindness of the Cheshires, was to no avail.

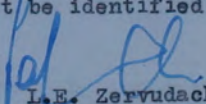
I am not going to waste your time or mine anymore and naturally the order I meant to put through for about one thousand buds and scions, this coming spring, has to fall through.

I will use my stock to graft with Fuerte. The only summer variety in this country, the Duke, of which I have a couple of hundred trees, produces a good fruit but it has no lasting qualities and therefore not fit for export.

I'm afraid, not only will we ever catch up with the countries in and around Europe which you have provided abundantly in the past with grafting material from Central America and Florida, but by the time we fill the gap, judging by the fine varieties these countries are already sending all the year round to England, France, Germany and Switzerland and probably other countries I have not visited, the markets in ten years time will be saturated and we will have worked for nothing.

I shall be very interested to have your views on the parasite which thrives in Guatemala but cannot be identified locally.

Yours sincerely,



L.E. Zervudachi
Daira Draneht
POB 1277
25, Talaat Harb
Alexandria.

Antigua, Guatemala, 27 Sept 1960

Dear Mr Zervaduchi:

Just what we expected, No? But I am mighty sorry that after Jorge Benitez and I had driven 150 miles to get your grafting material and then gone thru the government red tape to get a certificado de sanidad vegetal and then signed I dont know how many copies of the KLM Waybill (I believe they make out 12) and paid the air freight charges so there would not be any question at your end - everything goes up in smoke, as we say. I would not be so sorry, were it not for two things: first, it seems impossible to get material to you, and second, you ought to have the following varieties, and in quantity: Fuerte (which fortunately you already have), Nabal (probably the finest of the Guatemalans) and Hass. All these from California. Then you ought to have Lula, Booth 8, and Choquette from Florida. We did not send you Mayapan; we sent Pancho which is just about as good. If you could add to this list Rincon, Bacon and Zutano from California it would be desirable to do so, but the six mentioned are de rigueur.

What a pity you cannot hop onto a plane and fly over to Tel Aviv and get from Chanan Oppenheimer at Rehovot all the budwood you want of all these and other varieties! Oppenheimer has about 40 varieties in his collection. In Spain, where I spent 8 months in 1958 introducing and establishing avocado varieties from California and Florida, principally, you could also get anything you need - if the Spanish government will let it go out. It might be worth your while to get into correspondence with Sr don Luis Sarasola, Rancho California, Almuñecar (Granada), España. That is the place where I worked and he has about 20 of the best varieties on trial, including all those that you need; though he is losing some of them due to lime-induced iron chlorosis. The soil is highly calcareous and has very poor drainage qualities.

I doubt that you can get anything from California or Florida. I thought we might get material into Egypt from Guatemala, but I think perhaps I understand why it is impossible. I am enclosing a memo regarding the genus *Diaspis*. It would have been easy to dip those cuttings in any one of half a dozen insecticides and killed off any minute *Diaspis* scales which were present. We cleaned up the material the best we could and the Inspector here at the Ministerio certified that it was free from pests, but I suspect a few small scales escaped us.

I am glad you have Fuerte and Duke. The first-named would be the one I would first plant commercially and Duke has proved to be a good summer fruit for local use at Rehovot - in fact the best Mexican; and you ought to have some good Mexicans for local use. I would like to see you have Nabal ~~but~~ it has been such a grand success in Israel, and the other varieties I have mentioned. We know Nabal is an alternate bearer but the boys in Israel say it bears such tremendous crops every alternate year that it more than makes up for the year it misses!

Referring again to *Diaspis*, we do not know just what species we have here because this scale has never been important enough in this country to receive serious attention.

Sincerely,

Antigua Guatemala, 30 Sept 1960

Dear Mr Zervudachi:

Your registered letter of the 19th came yesterday, copy having come a couple of days earlier and I answered it. I hate to see you give up your laudable efforts to introduce the best commercial avocados into Egypt. But I agree that we are up against a tough job.

I failed to answer, in my recent letter, a question you asked in one of yours - about avocados in South Africa. You should get Bulletin No. 342 from the Department of Agriculture, which I believe you can obtain most easily by writing Dr E F Malan, at the Subtropical Horticultural Research Station, Nelspruit. Dr Malan was with me in Honduras some 4 or 5 years ago and he is the senior author of this bulletin. You will see that their leading variety is Fuerte. They are shipping this to England. The bulletin also describes Itzamna (one of my Guatemalan varieties, introduced in 1917) which is late; and Nabal, which I have mentioned, and which you should have by all means; and Hass - you know this variety is gaining importance in California; and Ryan and Edranol, both California Guatemalan x Mexican hybrids. The South African commercial varieties are pretty much in line with those of Israel. You ask if they have any local varieties of importance; I do not believe they do. I think they have depended almost entirely on California. Israel has the Ettinger, said to be a Fuerte seedling; aside from this one they too are depending, so far on California varieties, but I believe they should go in for a few of the Florida hybrids, mainly Lula and Booth 8.

Do you think you would have any chance of getting scions by air mail from Florida or California? That is the way I introduced about 25 varieties into Spain in 1958. About 5 scions wrapped in Vinyl film, put in a strong envelop, and sent as first class air mail. It cost me about five dollars for each shipment but if you can introduce a promising new variety for one dollar it sure is worth it.

As mentioned in my last, I am glad that you have Fuerte and Duke, because the former is likely to prove your best commercial variety for some time to come, and Duke is perhaps the best of the little thin-skinned Mexicans for local use during the season when there are no Fuertes.

Sincerely,

Wilson Popenoe