

Julie Frink

Julie Frink is the Curator for the Avocado Variety Collection, University of California Research Station in Irvine, California., a 200-acre research facility that includes more than 150 varieties of avocados. Her specialty is knowing every variety of avocado we can grow here in San Diego and will describe their flavor, texture and season. Recommending a year-round avocado variety selection is her specialty. When is an avocado ready to pick? Which avocado tree can tolerate frost?

One of Frink's tasks at the Irvine Field Station was to create a database that eventually listed more than a thousand avocado varieties. But chances are you will find just one type available at your local grocery store—the Hass avocado. It was named after Rudolph Hass, who patented the variety in 1935; it was then widely propagated and distributed by Brokaw Nursery of Whittier. All Hass trees today can be traced back to that tree in Rudolph Hass's yard.

You can listen to the pair share tips on selecting, growing, and caring for avocados in the home garden. Some of Frink's advice will be inspired by her experience tending to the trees in her own yard in Huntington Beach, where she has no fewer than 20 varieties by her last count.

Denny Luby

I joined CRFG in 1998 when I saw a cherimoya for the first time at the CRFG booth at the Orange County Fair. I started attending meetings and reading everything I could find about the fruit I could grow in my yard in Huntington Beach. I was on the Board of the California Cherimoya Association for 3 years. In 2004 I took the position of Greenscene Chairperson for our chapter at the Fullerton Arboretum garden show. This is where I learned from the growers of the plants donated to our club (the experts). At that time I started working with Riley Holly and Julie Frink at the South Coast Research and Extension Center. Two years later I had a part in the grafting DVD that is still available for sale in the Fruit Gardener. Since about 2010 I have been making appearances with Julie Frink at Avocado Festivals, Garden shows, Fairs, and other activities where we can display and discuss avocados. In 2015 I retired from nursing to spend more time in my yard planting, pruning, and grafting. I currently have 140 different fruiting plants in my yard. I have a USDA small lots of seed permit to import seeds and have recently added Nutmeg, Bread Fruit, Bilimbi, and Cacao to my 140.