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Abstract In 1947 six varieties of Old World figs, cultivated on about 50,000 acres in California, produced 30,500 tons of dried figs, the largest crop on record for the State.

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Figs—*Facts and Figures of 1948*

In 1947 six varieties of Old World figs, cultivated on about 50,000 acres in California, produced 30,500 tons of dried figs, the largest crop on record for the State.

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Introduction

SOME thirty years ago (Condit, 1919), my account of "Figs, Facts and Figures" began as follows: "Of all the fruit crops being planted in California there is hardly one which is being so favorably considered as the fig. Business men and ranchers throughout the state are discussing fig possibilities, the choice of varieties, soils and locations for the orchard and the things to be avoided in planting and pruning young trees. The fig acreage has already been doubled and bids fair to be tripled by plantings of 1920". The boom was due to high prices for figs and fig products and to the activities of promoters who painted rosy pictures of the expected profits from bearing fig "gardens". A Fig Growers' Association was organized to handle and market the fruit delivered by its members. Three years later (Condit, 1922) I wrote: "Considering the comparatively small acreage and tonnage of figs at the present time and the many new products being developed, a bright future for the fig seems assured". With this brief introduction let us look more closely at the past and present status of the fig industry.

History

The common fig, a native of the Old World, was early introduced into Mexico and later into California. Gardens at the San Gabriel Mission in 1829 included numerous fig trees. The va-

riety of fig grown at the Missions was undoubtedly the black fig now known as "Mission".

Near the middle of the nineteenth century settlers in California and local nurserymen began to receive cuttings and rooted trees of a considerable number of fig varieties from the eastern United States and from Europe. The White Adriatic was the most widely planted variety during the two decades following 1885, but the dried product lacked the tenderness of skin and flavor of the imported fig from Smyrna. The Yearbook of the United States Department of Agriculture for 1897 stated that the White Adriatic "has many points of merit, but the fact that its quality when dried is inferior to that of the imported dried fruit from Smyrna has resulted in several efforts to introduce and grow the Smyrna type of fig".

Cuttings of the true Smyrna fig were brought into California by the Evening Bulletin, San Francisco, by the Fancker Creek Nursery, Fresno, and by the State Board of Horticulture. The trees grew vigorously enough, but as the fruit invariably dropped when about the size of a marble, there developed a widespread suspicion that cuttings of some worthless variety rather than those of the true Smyrna fig had been secured.

It had long been known that the successful production of the Smyrna fig in Asia Minor and elsewhere was made possible by transferring fruits from the

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