
Inventory of the Department of Pomology Records AR-015

Finding aid created by Archives and Special Collections staff

University of California, Davis Library, University Archives

2019

1st Floor, Shields Library, University of California

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URL: <https://www.library.ucdavis.edu/archives-and-special-collections>

Language of Material: English

Contributing Institution: University of California, Davis Library, University Archives

Title: Department of Pomology Records

Creator: University of California, Davis. Department of Pomology.

Identifier/Call Number: AR-015

Physical Description: 13.6 linear feet

Date (inclusive): 1912-1965

Abstract: The records of the Department of Pomology include correspondence, course development materials, and an extensive set of photographic materials, including plates, prints, negatives, and slides.

Researchers should contact Archives and Special Collections to request collections, as many are stored offsite.

History

Pomology is the only academic department in the United States devoted solely to fruit science. The University of California, Davis Department of Pomology is responsible for instruction, research and continuing education related to the biology and production of fruit and nut crops, maintenance of their postharvest quality and utilization of their many products. The great diversity of fruit and nut crops, the value of their products, and the wide range of soil and climatic conditions in California emphasize the unique role of the department.

The UC Davis Department of Pomology has historical roots that trace back to the beginnings of the University of California. Public interest in agricultural instruction and research encouraged the California legislature to create the University of California in 1868 with the first campus located at Berkeley. In 1905, the California University Farm Bill authorized the University of California Regents to purchase land for the establishment of a University Farm School. In 1906, Davisville was selected as the site for the University Farm. In 1907, the University Farm was dedicated and Davisville was renamed Davis. By 1909, the University Farm School had opened at Davis. The UC Davis Department of Pomology began during the 1912-1913 fiscal year as the Division of Pomology located on the Berkeley campus after a reorganization of the Department of Horticulture there. The fledgling Division of Pomology was one of twenty-two divisions under the new Department of Agriculture. Instruction was given at Berkeley as well as at the University Farm School at Davis. Research projects were conducted at the University Farm as well as various agricultural experiment stations throughout the state of California. Interdivisional cooperation at that time was very common. For example, research in fruit breeding was conducted with collaboration from faculty in the Division of Genetics; investigations on irrigation practice and theory were conducted jointly with the Division of Irrigation Investigations and Practice; studies in pest management were conducted together with faculty from the Division of Entomology; while studies on specific fruit crops were often done in collaboration with the Division of Viticulture and Fruit Products. Research in pruning, irrigation, soil fertility, pollination, and plant nutrition produced historically relevant results that were of direct, practical benefit to the California fruit industry in the early years of the Division of Pomology's founding. The work also contributed meaningfully to the scientific understanding of the process of pollination and fertilization in fruit setting and fruit development. Study of fruit tree rootstocks was incorporated with the student laboratory planting at Davis with rootstock material being included in the variety collections. One of the more important areas of research begun in the first decade of the Division of Pomology was that of postharvest handling, storage and shipping of fruit. Over the years the applications of the research have contributed to the effective marketing of California fruits and fruit products across the country and around the world and so helped to assure the success of the state's fruit industry overall.

As the University Farm began to change and grow, so too did the Division of Pomology. By 1922, the University Farm became known as the Northern Branch of the College of Agriculture of the University of California. In 1938, it was re-named the College of Agriculture at Davis. In 1951, the College of Letters and Science at Davis was established and in 1952, the College of Agriculture at Davis became independent from the University of California at Berkeley. In 1953, the Division of Pomology became the Department of Pomology, gaining independence from the Department of Agriculture just as the University of California, Davis would gain its independence in 1959 when it was designated an independent campus of the University of California. The Department of Pomology continued its previous studies in fruit variety improvement, soil and water management, fruit thinning, and fruit harvesting, handling and storage while also expanding its research into investigating the use of radiation for food preservation. Along with studying the possibilities for extending the storage life of fruits by irradiation, research in the mechanical methods of fruit handling was investigated cooperatively with the Department of Agricultural Engineering along with research on bulk handling of fruit which brought about a major change in fruit handling practices throughout most of the industry with a shift from the use of small field lug boxes to pallet bins for transporting fruit from orchard to processing plant. Cooperative work with the Department of Food Science and Technology included work on fruit maturity and ripening in relation to canning practices and the quality of the processed product. Fruit breeding programs made promising and dramatic progress especially with plums, peaches, nectarines, and strawberries.

Cooperative work extended beyond the University with the Department of Pomology playing a significant role during the latter part of the 1960's and early 1970's in a cooperative education and research program, known as the "Convenio", between the University of Chile and the University of California, designed particularly to assist the University of Chile to strengthen its teaching and research in agriculture with the Department of Pomology assisting with fruit culture.

The UC Davis Department of Pomology is now part of the Department of Plant Sciences which was created by consolidating the four commodity-based departments of Agronomy and Range Science, Pomology, Vegetable Crops and Environmental Horticulture. This pooling of manpower and resources has fostered better focus on the teaching, research and outreach missions of one of the leading academic programs in agricultural and environmental sciences in the country.

History by Steffany Caria

Scope and Contents

The collection includes correspondence, course development materials, and an extensive set of photographic materials, including plates, prints, negatives, and slides.

Access

Collection is open for research.

Processing Information

Liz Phillips encoded this finding aid with help from student assistant Aditi Sinha.

Preferred Citation

[Identification of item], Department of Pomology Records, AR-015, Archives and Special Collections, UC Davis Library, University of California, Davis.

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Subjects and Indexing Terms

Fruit-culture

University of California, Davis. Department of Pomology -- Archives

University of California, Davis -- History

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Box 1, Folder 4	J.R. King correspondence 1944
Box 1, Folder 5	J.R. King photos 1949
Box 1, Folder 6	J.R. King correspondence 1943-1952
Box 1, Folder 7	Horticulture research and teaching in California 1947
Box 1, Folder 8	Pomology short course 1978-1979
Box 1, Folder 9	Wolfskill Ranch Dinner 1965
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Box 2, Folder 24	Empty dividers labeled Digging, Dwarfing, Budding, Grafting etc.