

# On 'Plantclimate' Map

# No Such Thing As Santa Cruz Climate

If you think you came west for the California climate or to Santa Cruz for Santa Cruz climate, think again. There's no such thing. Mention "climate" to horticulturist Marston Kimball of the

University of California, and he'll say, "Which one?"

We have more climates than any other state . . . more extremes of climate . . . and we're the first state to do something about them: namely classify them according to plant growth.

There are many dozens of California climates and also several climates in Santa Cruz county.

Kimball has mapped most of them according to plant behavior. The resulting "plantclimate" maps—first of their kind in the United States—will help real estate brokers, chambers of commerce, industries seeking new locations, and farmers planting new crops, by telling them what plants will grow where.

Kimball has plotted his plant behavior data on 32 county maps at one inch to the mile. The climates of Santa Cruz county were plotted in cooperation with Farm Advisors Koch and Melendy. Eventually he hopes to produce charts on all 58 counties. Put together, they'll form a state map 80 feet long.

The California Real Estate association has published Kimball's preliminary "plantclimate" map of California as an aid in locating industrial and residential areas.

When Feather river water comes to the west side of the San Joaquin valley, such maps will help growers decide what crops can be grown successfully.

City dwellers moving to foothill areas will know from the maps what kinds of flowers, shrubs, and grasses will survive and help protect their houses against brushfire. Government agencies, city planners, landscape architects and others will find the information useful.

Kimball made some interesting observations during his mapmaking studies, starting in 1952. For example:

"No California county can claim to have only one "plantclimate"—that is, a uniformity of climate that would permit a range of plants to grow equally well anywhere in the county. Sutter is the county that comes closest.

"No other state has such a wide range of climates as California," adds the veteran agricultural extension service horticulturist, who works out of UCLA office and lives in Alhambra.

"California has more unique climates per square mile and more square miles of unique climates than any other state or any other equal geographical area of the world.

"The state has all extremes of humidity, dryness, rainfall, and temperature, plus altitudes ranging from 276 feet below sea level to 14,495 above, with commercial agriculture as high as 9,000 feet.

It has agricultural areas that get colder in winter and summer than some parts of Alaska, and others that get hotter than the Sahara desert.

"San Diego and Imperial counties boast long growing seasons—360 to 365 days per year. But in Modoc, Sierra, Lassen, and other high mountain counties frost can be encountered any night all summer; growing seasons are from two weeks to two months."

The variety of our climates, Kimball points out, enables farmers to produce top-quality specialty crops somewhere in the state every month of the year.

By making the most of our climates, California farmers out-produce all others, to a total of about three billion dollars a year. We also have more commercial crops—about 200—than any other state in the nation.

Yet we can't count on agricultural abundance forever, Kimball warns. He said: "With 65,000 acres of California's climate-land complex being diverted each year to city uses, with every golf course taking 100 acres, every mile of freeway 25 to 30 acres, we must know our climates in order to know where our food will come from 20 years hence.

"Only in recent years are we finding the real explanations as to why crops in one area are successful but fail nearby. As new agricultural land opens up with improved distribution of California water, scientists using plantclimate maps and controlled environment chambers will be able to predict accurately what crops will be adapted to the new areas opening up."

## Mike San Filippo Aboard Carrier

Michael San Filippo, son of Mr. and Mrs. Michael San Filippo, 106 Valencia avenue, Aptos, is serving aboard the anti-submarine warfare support aircraft carrier USS Hornet which recently joined the Seventh fleet in the western Pacific.

San Filippo, boilerman third class, will participate in training exercises and goodwill visits while in the Far East. The Hornet heads the most modern hunter-killer group to serve in the area.

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