



The History of Agriculture in Tenerife

On the 170th anniversary of Canarias Cabrera Pinto High School, we would like to highlight the importance of this institution both in the economic and cultural life in our island.

The proposal of an exhibition on Agriculture, something apparently far from the role an educational institution must have, justifies the protagonism of this highschool, considered a reference throughout the second half of the 19th century.

The amount of objects included in this exhibition bespeak the relevance of Cabrera Pinto High School on the education of the youth at that time as well as it shows how much its teachers were involved in the economic activity of those years. The exhibition is about the most important types of crops in the last centuries.

It begins with the subjects of Agriculture and Topography which used to be taught in this High School during the second third of the 19th century.



The first most important crop in the 16th century was that of Sugar Cane



After its decline at the end of the century it was replaced by a new product: WINE, which was significantly important until the 18th century.



The consequences of the political problems with England damaged the wine bussines so that it was necessary to introduce a different product: LA COCHINILLA (Cochineal)



COCHINEAL, a red colorant, whose primary constituent is carminic acid, salt is made of the dried and pulverized bodies of female cochineal beetles and is USED to color food and cosmetics and for dyeing.

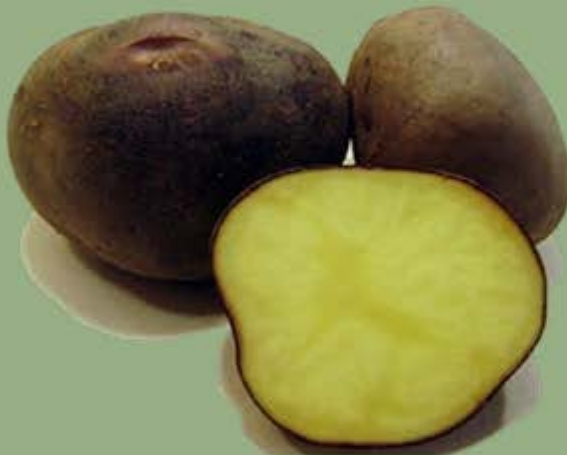


It was the English who promoted at the end of nineteenth century the last two major crops: BANANA AND TOMATO.





But the history of agriculture in the island of Tenerife can not disregard the cultivation of subsistence crops like cereals.



A product that has long been part of our diet and was brought directly from America must be part of this exhibition: the POTATO.

Life for the Canary peasant has been linked to self-sufficiency, lack of markets and remoteness from major commercial centers. It is therefore necessary to introduce a new farming policy which includes: livestock farming, bee-keeping and honey production.



On an island without permanent watercourses, the peasant farmer has always fought for their search with unflagging effort, therefore, it is essential to dedicate a section to IRRIGATION.