Article

Fruit-growing family farms in the municipalities of Itatiba, Louveira, Valinhos, and Vinhedo: socioeconomic and cultural aspects in the regional context of São Paulo, Brazil

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Fruit-growing family farms in the municipalities of Itatiba, Louveira, Valinhos, and Vinhedo: socioeconomic and cultural aspects in the regional context of São Paulo, Brazil

Abstract

The article discusses the importance of family farming focused on the production of fruit, for the municipalities of Itatiba, Louveira, Valinhos, and Vinhedo (state of São Paulo, Brazil). In the rural areas of these municipalities it is possible to find small rural properties formed from the disintegration of large coffee farms. In these properties, family relationships predominate, with the presence of the cultural heritage coming from the tradition of immigrants who arrived and settled in this region of the state of São Paulo between the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century. The study seeks to understand the socioeconomic and cultural configuration of the analyzed municipalities by geographic and historical analyses. To this end, broad bibliographic research was carried out, in addition to field research to collect primary data and to consult databases, such as the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE) and the Department of Agriculture and Food Supply of the State of São Paulo to collect, analyze, and tabulate secondary data.

Keywords: Fruit cultivation. Rural economy. Culture.

A agricultura familiar fruticultora nos municípios de Itatiba, Louveira, Valinhos e Vinhedo: aspectos socioeconômicos e culturais no contexto regional paulista

Resumo

O artigo discute a importância da agricultura familiar voltada para a produção de frutas para os municípios de Itatiba, Louveira, Valinhos e Vinhedo (SP). Na zona rural desses municípios, há pequenas propriedades formadas a partir da desagregação

de grandes fazendas de café. Nessas propriedades, predominam relações do tipo familiar, com a presença da herança cultural da tradição de imigrantes que chegaram e se fixaram nessa região do estado de São Paulo entre fim do século XIX e início do XX. O estudo procura compreender a configuração socioeconômica e cultural dos municípios estudados por meio de análises geográficas e históricas. Para tanto, procedeu-se a uma ampla pesquisa bibliográfica, trabalhos de campo para coleta de dados primários e consulta a bancos de dados como o Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística (IBGE) e a Secretaria de Agricultura e Abastecimento do Estado de São Paulo para coleta, análise e tabulação de dados secundários.

Palavras-chave: Fruticultura. Economia rural. Cultura.

Agricultura familiar productora de frutas en los municipios de Itatiba, Louveira, Valinhos y Vinhedo: aspectos socioeconómicos y culturales en el contexto regional paulista

Resumen

El artículo discute la importancia de la agricultura familiar orientada a la producción de frutas para los municipios de Itatiba, Louveira, Valinhos y Vinhedo (SP). En las áreas rurales de estos municipios es posible encontrar pequeñas propiedades formadas a partir de la desintegración de grandes haciendas cafetaleras. En estas propiedades predominan las relaciones de tipo familiar, con presencia del patrimonio cultural proveniente de la tradición de los inmigrantes que llegaron y se establecieron en esta región del estado de São Paulo entre fines del siglo XIX y principios del XX. El estudio busca comprender la configuración socioeconómica y cultural de los municipios estudiados a través de análisis geográficos e históricos. Para ello se realizó una extensa investigación bibliográfica, se realizaron trabajos de campo para recolectar datos primarios y consultas de bases de datos como el Instituto Brasileño de Geografía y Estadística (IBGE) y la Secretaría de Agricultura y Abastecimiento del Estado de São Paulo para la recolección, análisis y tabulación de datos secundarios.

Palabras clave: Fruticultura. Economía rural. Cultura.

Introduction

The production of crops, such as persimmon, grapes, figs, and guava, is of great importance for the municipalities of Itatiba, Louveira, Valinhos, and Vinhedo (state of São Paulo, Brazil). In this region of the state, fruit cultivation has contributed for decades to the regional economy, in addition to favoring the preservation of memory by perpetuating traditional cultures related to the massive presence of descendants of European immigrants, especially Italians, who settled and began to work as tenant farmers in coffee farms in the regions of Campinas and Jundiaí, especially from the mid-19th century onwards.

Many of these immigrants arrived due to the end of the slavery period that imposed the need for cheap labor to work in coffee plantations. In 1850, with the signing of the Eusébio de Queiroz Law and the ban on the entry of enslaved Black people into Brazil, the slave trade and free trade were prevented. In any case, the problem of lack of workforce to meet the needs of large coffee plantations began. In this context, European countries ended up becoming the major suppliers of immigrants who could meet this demand (Bega dos Santos, 1994; Fausto, 2010; Martins, 2013).

Overall, the Brazilian government supported the coffee economy in every way and, particularly in Italy, there was wide dissemination of the subsidized immigration system, from the 1880s onwards. It was not an immigration process aiming at occupying the territory, but a way of providing workforce to coffee farms, sacrificing the immigrant for the benefit of the farmer (Bega dos Santos, 1994).

On several occasions, immigrants whose trip was subsidized by the national government were sent to official colonial centers, becoming small landowners. These centers were generally consolidated on lands not suitable for crops such as coffee and sugarcane, where immigrants could devote themselves to the cultivation of cheap foods – such as corn, rice, beans, and cassava – which, despite being widely consumed, did not have a significant market, because all the large farms and rural properties produced them for consumption. Thus, the production met the needs of the immigrants' family and the surplus was sold in small urban areas. However, for the most part, subsidized immigrants who went to São Paulo (SP) had their trips paid for by the São Paulo government, not having, in this case, any freedom to decide where to go or what to do. Upon arriving at the port of Santos (SP), immigrants were taken to Hospedaria do Imigrante [Immigrant's Lodge], where they stayed for up to eight days, and then were taken to regions where there was greater demand for workforce (Martins, 2013).

Italians were the main group of immigrants to provide labor for coffee plantations. Between 1887 and 1900, 73% of the immigrants who arrived at SP were Italians, although not all of them get involved with the development of agricultural activities. These people were very poor, and this fact is accurate, as the subsidies offered by the government represented a strong element of attraction (Fausto, 2010).

This Italian immigration flow marked the economic and sociocultural life of the entire state of São Paulo, including the regions of Campinas and Jundiaí, which received a significant number of immigrants at the peak of this process, given the need for large coffee plantations. Anyhow, for these people, working on the farm was temporary, as their real objective was to

build up some savings to buy their piece of land. The crises of the coffee economy, especially that of 1929, provided the conditions for achieving this project on a large scale. Thus, the presence of Italian immigrants attributed new characteristics to the agricultural economy and to the organization of regional society, which until then had coffee as its main crop. Among the factors that contributed to this, we highlight soil depletion, due to the predatory way in which coffee cultivation was developed in the region, and the successive crises that coffee underwent since the beginning of the 20th century, with the "coup de grâce" in 1929, which allowed immigrants to acquire their small piece of land.

Immigrants had a great influence on the country's agrarian life, especially in São Paulo. The struggle for property and the fragmentation of large farms enabled social ascension and the emergence of smallholders in the state. Small properties arose as a result of the coffee cultivation directed to the foreign market. The transfer of land to new owners and, mainly, the decline of coffee monoculture, led to new forms of land use throughout the state and also in the regions of Campinas and Jundiaí.

In this sense, this article seeks to understand how fruit production gained socioeconomic relevance for the municipalities covered in this study, especially by the work of immigrants and their descendants, favoring, among other things, the crystallization of new cultural habits, the diversification of agricultural production, and the strengthening of the rural economy in the state of São Paulo.

The spatial focus of the study is on Itatiba, Louveira, Valinhos, and Vinhedo, due to their similarities with regard to the historical past. These are municipalities formed from the disaggregation of the territories of Jundiaí and Campinas, having welcomed throughout their history a large number of Italian immigrants, most of them responsible for the beginning of the planting of fruit crops in the region. To achieve the presented results, we carried out extensive bibliographic research using classical and contemporary authors as reference, fieldwork in the rural regions of the highlighted municipalities, as well as survey, analysis, and tabulation of data in secondary sources such as the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE) and the Department of Agriculture and Food Supply of the State of São Paulo.

Fruit production in the municipalities of Itatiba, Louveira, Valinhos, and Vinhedo

As aforementioned, fruit production began to gain notoriety in the regions of Campinas and Jundiaí from the moment coffee started to decline. This situation led to part of the coffee farms being divided and, as a consequence, immigrants and their descendants, who at the time had some savings, were able to have access to their small pieces of land. In this context, coffee monoculture was being replaced by a polyculture system aimed at meeting subsistence demands, with the subsequent sale of the produced surplus.

Diversified products, which until then were not part of what has been produced or consumed in the region, became more frequent in the rural context and, consequently, in people's daily lives, such as fruits like grapes, figs, guava, and persimmon, very relevant to the economies of the municipalities until today. The fruit growing potential of the region has become a fact.

To a large extent, due to the work developed by immigrants and their descendants who settled in the regions of Campinas and Jundiaí between the end of the 19th century and the first decades of the 20th century, introducing new characteristics to the dynamics of the regional agricultural economy, the habits, and customs of rural areas where, to date, small properties with family work predominate.

Thus, the historical process that led to the fragmentation of large coffee farms is essential to understand the way in which the land ownership structure was organized in the studied municipalities, as this process reinforces the important role that family farming has come to play in the regional economy and culture from the mid-1930s.

Data from *Censo Agropecuário Paulista* (São Paulo Agriculture Census) (São Paulo, 2016/2017) indicated that, in the municipalities under study, most rural properties measure up to 50 ha. Overall, this measure does not exceed the value of four fiscal modules, a parameter of the Brazilian legislation to define the family farming system. In Itatiba, the fiscal module corresponds to 12 ha. Conversely, in Louveira, Valinhos, and Vinhedo, it corresponds to 10 ha. These are small rural properties where it is common for the members of the family that owns the land to work, using traditional techniques. In Table 1, the area of the production units of the municipalities on screen.

Table 1 – Area of agricultural small farms in the analyzed municipalities (ha) (2016/2017)

Area of APUS (ha)	Itatiba	Louveira	Valinhos	Vinhedo
0 - 1 ha	4	12	15	9
1 - 2 ha	18	42	51	15
2 - 5 ha	145	124	188	65
5 - 10 ha	136	63	59	23
10 - 20 ha	116	26	25	24
20 - 50 ha	99	13	12	11
50 - 100 ha	41	5	10	4
100 - 200 ha	23	2	7	3
200 - 500 ha	15	-	3	2
500 - 1,000 ha	6	-	-	-
1,000 - 2,000 ha		-	-	-
2,000 - 5,000 ha	-	-	-	-
5,000 - 10,000 ha	-	-	-	-
above de 10,000 ha	-	-	-	-

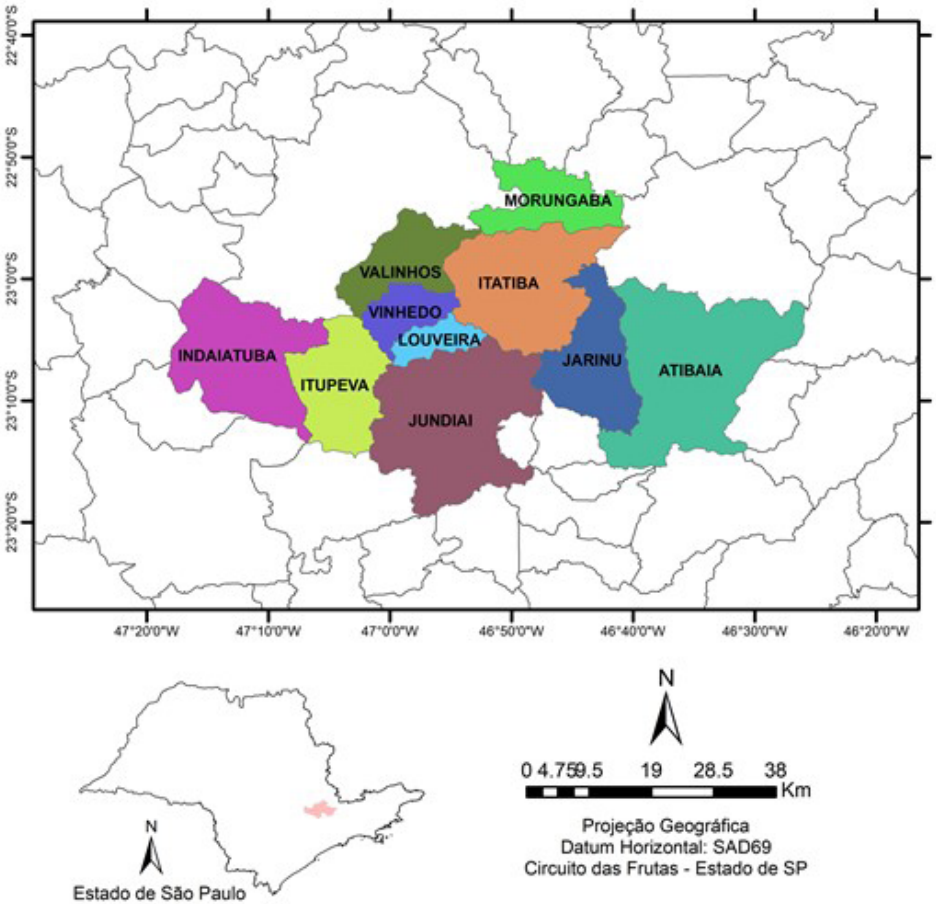
source: São Paulo (2016/2017).
organization: Prepared by the author, 2020.

Currently, the high quality of fruit production on country houses and small rural properties in the analyzed municipalities should be highlighted. This quality led to a degree of organization that gave the region's small farmers visibility on the part of state and municipal governments, in such a way that they are now inserted in the context of the so-called Fruit Circuit (Bredariol,

2020), a tourist hub that brings together municipalities reference in fruit production in the state of São Paulo, with a strong presence of family farming.

The following municipalities are part of the Fruit Circuit: Atibaia, Indaiatuba, Itatiba, Itupeva, Louveira, Morungaba, Jundiaí, Jarinu, Valinhos, and Vinhedo (Map 1). Each of these municipalities specialized in the production of specific types of fruit. Atibaia is famous for its strawberries; Indaiatuba is specialized in the production of grapes and Barbados cherry; Itatiba stands out for its persimmon production; Itupeva, for the production of grapes, as well as Louveira and Vinhedo; Morungaba, for the production of fruit compotes such as grapes, figs, oranges, peaches, among others; Valinhos has a high production of figs and guavas; and Jundiaí is a reference for its high production of grapes.

Map 1 – Municipalities that are part of the Fruit Circuit



source: Bardin-Camparotto et al. (2013).

According to Bardin-Camparotto et al. (2013), the Fruit Circuit hub emerged in the 2000s, but it was only institutionalized in 2002, by State Decree No. 47.180, being common in the region for tourists to visit rural properties to learn about the production process of fruits, wines, and artisanal sweets, in addition to having a festival calendar that is an attraction for visitors. The authors also note that the region has natural beauties and a pleasant climate, with potential for the practice of adventure sports, ecotourism, and rural tourism; there are hotels, food options, and a variety of fruit and handicraft shops. The presence of family farming is strong in the rural areas of the municipalities analyzed in the present study.

> In addition to the traditional fruit-producing properties, there are properties where cattle and sheep are raised on a small scale, besides the production of vegetables and areas where eucalyptus plantations predominate. Fruit cultivation is very important for the municipalities addressed in this study. [...] Persimmon, guava, figs, and grapes are among the most cultivated crops and are the reason for large festivals to be held in Itatiba, Louveira, Valinhos, and Vinhedo at harvest time, generating income not only due to the sale of products, but also due to gastronomic and rural tourism, which ends up attracting many visitors to the region (Bredariol, 2015, p. 329-330, our translation).

Many of the properties also offer leisure activities, such as fishing, ranches, restaurants, and small stills and wine cellars, which represent habits and traditions linked to the countryside, still present in the 21st century (Bredariol, 2015).

Bernardi (2009) conducted significant studies on the so-called Fruit Circuit. For the author, the fact that the region has become a reference in fruit production is linked to the presence of immigrants who, over time, got used to having festivals and events to promote fruit production. These immigrants were wage earners and when they acquired their lands, they started cultivating fruits, such as figs, guava, and grapes, in addition to preserving customs such as religion, holding festivals, and making wines. Currently, the descendants of immigrants continue with the production of their ancestors, contributing to the increase in agricultural production, profitability, and strengthening of traditions and cultural habits brought by the immigrants (Bernardi, 2009).

Thus, we can verify that the habits and traditions linked to the work developed in the field are part of what we understand as cultural heritage in the region. In Itatiba, Louveira, Valinhos, and Vinhedo, despite the influences of the urban environment and the pressures of the capitalist market logic, it is still possible to perceive that cultural traits remain in rural areas. These traits are part of the social memory of the people who inhabit these areas, so they are passed on from generation to generation. Within this context, it would not be an exaggeration to consider these habits and traditions a cultural heritage that can be preserved and protected.

The grape crop

Apparently, grape was the first fruit to be produced on a relevant scale in the regions of Campinas and Jundiaí. Despite being present in Brazilian lands since the beginning of colonization, grape never had any weight in the economic context of the colony. In São Paulo, viticulture took a long time to develop, because in the 18th century it was annihilated by mining and in the 19th century, there was only room for tropical monoculture. In addition, for many years, the Portuguese government imposed a ban on the planting of this fruit in Brazil, aiming at encouraging the Portuguese wine industry. Thus, it was only from the second half of the 19th century onwards that grape cultivation began to appear in rural São Paulo, still in the background, through the work of Italian tenant farmers (Inglez de Souza, 1959a, 1959b).

As Inglez de Souza (1959a) pointed out, the beginning of viticulture in São Paulo in noteworthy proportions was due to the work of Italian immigrants who had settled in the

municipality of Jundiaí, which contributed to a greater diversification of production in the countryside. The planting of grapes by immigrants residing in Jundiaí had strictly domestic purposes. However, the productivity of the crop in São Paulo, especially the Isabel grape variety (*Vitis labrusca*), has drawn attention, and, from the crops established in Jundiaí, especially in the lands of Núcleo Colonial Barão de Jundiaí (Colonial Center), the crop extended to the entire surrounding region. It was in the lands of the aforementioned colonial center and in the Caxambu neighborhood that the oldest vineyards of Jundiaí were located, all formed by the work of Italian immigrants (Inglez de Souza, 1959a).

Nevertheless, as Inglez de Souza himself (1959a) pointed out, even before gaining prominence in Jundiaí, the grape already had some visibility in neighboring municipalities, such as Itatiba, for example, where wine grapes had been produced since the mid-1880s. The author verified that, in 1889, the state of São Paulo had a wine production of around 1,750,000 liters, concentrated in the municipalities of São Paulo, Itatiba, Mogi das Cruzes, São Roque, Cunha, and Sorocaba, with Jundiaí not being prominent in this set.

In addition, already in 1888, the wines produced in Itatiba were considered the best in the Province of São Paulo when they were presented at the First Exhibition of National Sugar and Wines. The wines produced in Itatiba were made from the Isabel grape and judged by Frederico Maurício Draenert (1889, p. 20, free translation), who stated:

> The best natural or pure wines, red and white, from the Province of São Paulo, are those from Itatiba, although the red No. 17 is still too acidic, a defect that can be corrected [...]. Almost all wines from São Paulo are very acidic, a characteristic due to, in part, the bad luck of American vines, from the *Vitis labrusca* group, introduced and cultivated, and in part to the climatic conditions, as explained in the "Report on viticulture in Brazil." However, with some art in the practice of winemaking, excess acids can be reduced to obtain a good pasture wine. If the Itatiba wines contained 0.2 to 0.3% less acidity, they would present the type of excellent national wines, as far as it is possible to judge them by chemical analysis.

Anyway, even in that period, the main agricultural product of Itatiba was, without a doubt, coffee. It is a well-known fact that vineyards only began to emerge with representation in the Jundiaí region at the end of the first decade of the 20th century, as a result of the retreat and decay of the coffee cultivation.

Initially, these small vineyards were linked to crops, such as corn and beans, on the small properties of the former tenant farmers, who were able to obtain their possession by fragmenting the farms where, many times, they had even worked. Gradually, the grape cultivation imposed itself on the rural context of Jundiaí and region, acquiring great importance (Mattos, 1952).

Once proving the viticulture aptitude of the region, in the 1940s, Homem de Melo (1945) found that, in the state of São Paulo, the most notable region with grape production on a commercial scale was in the area served by Estrada de Ferro Paulista (São Paulo Railway), comprising the municipalities of Campinas, Jundiaí, Itatiba and surroundings, where the fruit was

produced not only for fresh consumption, but also for the manufacture of wines, with production geared towards supplying large cities, such as São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro, in addition to all small cities in São Paulo. The author had already demonstrated the large production of grapes found at the time in the Louveira district (Homem de Melo, 1945).

It is worth resuming that, although at first grapes were cultivated aiming at producing wines in the region, over time, the production was oriented towards planting table grapes, which proved to be more profitable for producers, considering the high competitiveness presented by the grapes for viniculture produced in the state of Rio Grande do Sul (Mattos, 1952).

Some canteens known for the quality of their wines came to exist in the region; however, the proximity of large consumer markets of table grapes, such as the cities of São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro, made the production to be specialized in this type of product, transforming grape production into viniculture, an essentially domestic activity. Over time, the cultivation of *Niágara branca* and *Niágara rosada* varieties replaced the Isabel and Seibel wine varieties, spreading throughout the region and gaining great economic relevance (Navarra, 1977).

Nowadays, there are still wineries in the region, but the production is small-scale and quite artisanal. In fact, gradually, the region has stood out as a major producer of table grapes, with special notoriety for the *Niágara* variety. Thus, the small production of wines is another form of capital gain at the properties, which end up attracting rural tourism to the region.

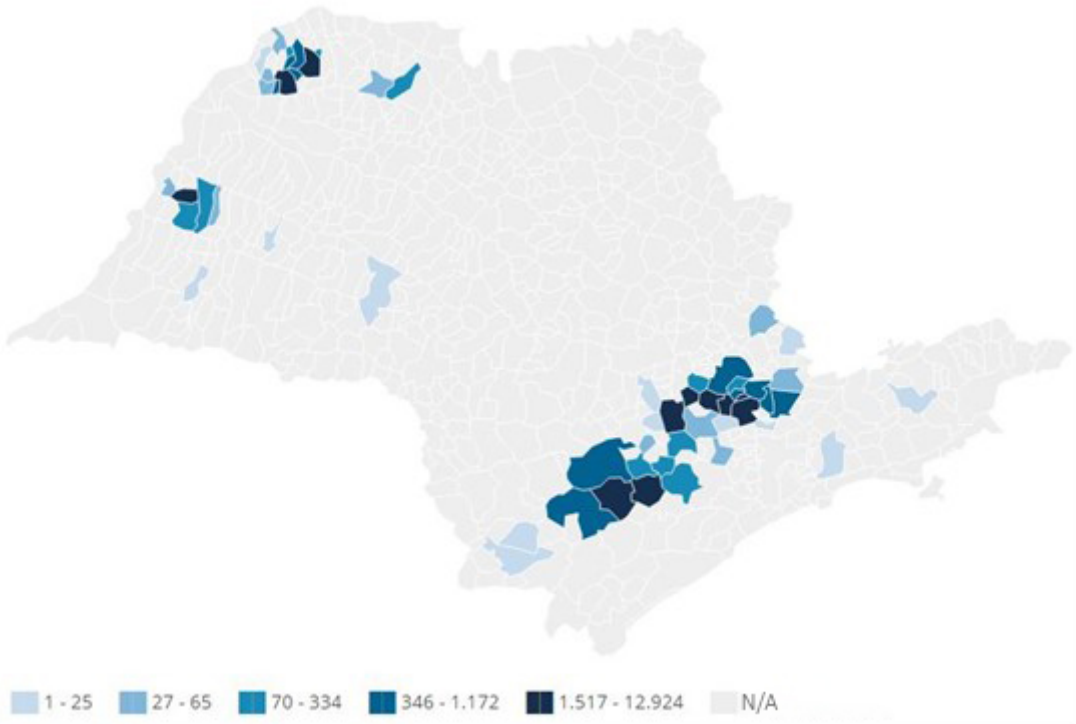
As Mattos (1952) rightly noted, at the peak of its expansion, from Jundiaí, vine cultivation extended north to the region of Vinhedo, the former district of Rocinha, associating itself with different rural activities. The influence of Campinas attributed to this area a special feature, because, among the vineyards, there were pastures and stables dedicated to the production of dairy cattle. Near Valinhos, these vineyards were associated with fig plantations. Towards Itatiba, the vineyards established themselves as a constant presence in the rural context, associating themselves with old coffee farms. Finally, to the south of Vinhedo, there were the wine-growing areas of Louveira, formed on the basis of the famous *Niágara* to produce table grapes. In this region, the author still found old farms trying to follow the evolution of the agrarian economy, where the cultivation of vines was associated with coffee, in addition to bananas and sugar cane (Mattos, 1952).

The white and rounded berry *Niágara* originated from the cross-breeding process between the species *Vitis labrusca L*. and *V. vinifera L*. Introduced in Brazil in mid-1894, from 1910 onwards it began to be widely cultivated in Brazilian vineyards, especially in the state of São Paulo, where it acquired economic prominence. In 1933, a *Niágara branca* strain with bunches of red berries was found in Jundiaí, in the then Louveira district, on the property of a descendant of Italian immigrants. Thus, by somatic mutation, the famous *Niágara rosada* arose, which over time became the most cultivated grape in the state. The *Niágara rosada* is, therefore, a Brazilian variety, although it comes from a North American variety. Later, other genetic mutations occurred that led to the emergence of new varieties: *Gigante branca* (1937), *Branca oval* (1938), *Rosada gigante* (1941), *Niágara Rajada* (1947), and *Niágara maravilha*, with pink and olive berries (Inglez de Souza, 1959a, 1959b).

From the somatic mutation that gave rise to the *Niágara rosada*, the region of Jundiaí established itself as the largest producer of this variety in Brazil, which is still significant in the regional economic context.

The Census of Agriculture of the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE) (Brasil, 2017) ranked the region, which comprises the municipalities here analyzed, in a prominent position with regard to the production of table grapes in the state of São Paulo (Figure 1). The municipality of Louveira was among the ten largest producers in the state, having produced a total of 3,524 t of table grapes. In the same period, Itatiba produced 843 t; Vinhedo, 794 t; and Valinhos, 213 t. As for the value of production, the four municipalities totaled BRL 16,362,000.00, which shows the strength and importance of family farming focused on the production of table grapes for these municipalities.

Figure 1 – Table grape: quantity (t) produced in the state of São Paulo – 2017



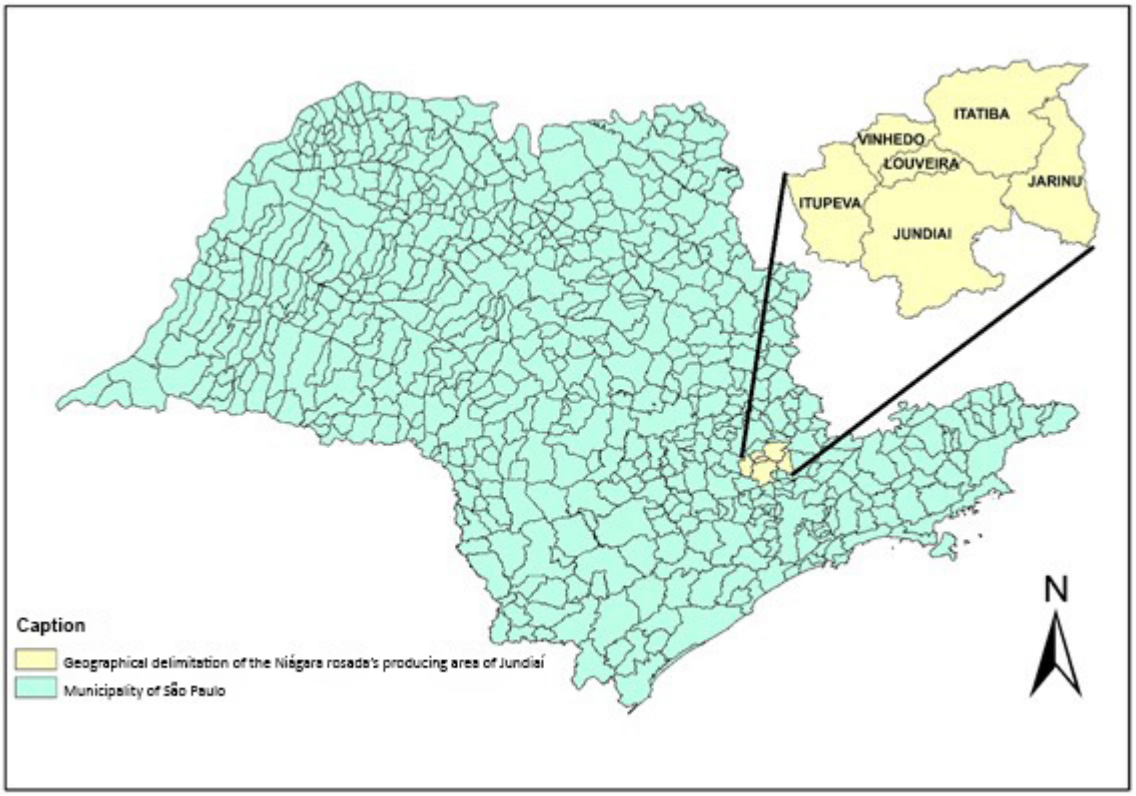
source: Brasil (2017).

Another point to be highlighted is that, as *Niágara rosada* originates from the region, there have been efforts, on the part of public authorities and local farmers in a joint work with the Brazilian Agricultural Research Corporation (Embrapa) and the Agronomic Institute of Campinas (IAC), to obtain the seal of geographical indication of the fruit, which would make it even more competitive in the market. In general, products, such as grapes and wine, are very significant in the context of geographical indication registrations in Brazil.

As Verdi (2019) showed, there are currently six areas of geographical indication for wines in Brazil: Vale dos Vinhedos, Pinto Bandeira, Vale da Uva Goethe, Altos Montes, Monte Belo, and Farroupilha, all in the South region, in addition to two for fine table grapes, especially Vale do Submédio São Francisco and Marialva. In the case of *Niágara rosada*, the delimitation of

the area for the attribution of the geographical indication of the variety comprises the region called Velha Jundiaí, composed of the municipalities Itatiba, Itupeva, Jarinu, Jundiaí, Louveira, and Vinhedo, where the somatic mutation from *Niágara branca* to *Niágara rosada* took place, predominating cultivation until the present time (Map 2) (Verdi, 2019).

Map 2 – Geographical delimitation of the Niágara rosada's producing area of Jundiaí, Municipality of São Paulo



source: Verdi (2019).

The *Niágara rosada* production process was successful due to the region's climate and soil conditions, in addition to very specific crop management techniques, which makes the fruit well-accepted by consumers. Furthermore, in the municipalities of the Jundiaí region, the grape is associated with the history and traditional cultural references inherited from the Italian immigrants who arrived to work in coffee plantations. Many of the traditions that involve the cultivation of the fruit are represented at festivals to celebrate the harvest, religious celebrations, among other aspects, which makes the grape, in addition to being an economically outstanding crop, a historical element that characterizes and contributes to crystallizing cultural habits observed in this region of the state of São Paulo.

The figs crop

Figs production in the region of the municipalities in question has great socioeconomic notoriety, as it generates employment and income for small farmers and family farmers established there. As in the case of grapes, figs cultivation gained economic relevance in the region due to the work of Italian immigrants.

According to Conti (2010) and Ming, Menezes and Guerra (2011), the fig arrived in the region of Campinas, more precisely in the old district of Valinhos, in 1901, by the Italian immigrant Lino Busatto who, after settling in the place, started cultivating white figs, also known as *pingo-de-mel*. However, the Italian wanted to taste the different figs from his land and requested seedlings to be sent from Italy. These seeds arrived in 1901, and when they began to bear fruit, they pleased the tastes of Busatto's neighbors. As a result, many seedlings of the European variety were distributed, which led to the rapid expansion of the crop in the region. Thus, due to Busatto's initiative, already in 1910, the cultivated area significantly increased, and Valinhos became known as the "Land of the Fig," with plantations that did not stop growing (Conti, 2010; MING; MENEZES; GUERRA, 2011).

In the 1940s, Homem de Melo (1945) already highlighted the relevance of fig cultivation for the entire region of Campinas and Jundiaí, with large planted areas and supplying the fruit fresh or in syrup to large consumer markets, such as São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro, where the products arrived through São Paulo Railway. In addition, the author already verified a very particular type of agricultural exploitation in the region, with the predominance of small properties of three to five bushels, with almost exclusive production of figs and grapes, leaving small areas for crops such as rice, beans, and corn. Homem de Melo also verified that, as they are fruits with special cultivation and very different from the most common crops developed in the state, grapes and figs led producers to adopt agricultural techniques superior to the average of other farmers. In fact, the rural population in this part of the state had a higher level of education, due to its greater density and proximity to the roadside rural properties, with better access to schools in the region (Homem de Melo, 1945).

The expansion of figs as a relevant agricultural crop marked the entire region surrounding Valinhos, contributing to diversify fruit production in this region of the state. Navarra (1977) studied land use in Itatiba and Morungaba between the 1950s and 1960s and found that, in the rural neighborhood of Mombuca, in Itatiba, it was common to have orchards on small farms with the production of fruits, such as pears, apples, persimmons and, in particular, figs, due to the great influence of Valinhos. The author also noted that, in Itatiba, the development of fruit production was strongly related to the work of Italian immigrants and their descendants, a characteristic that remains until today (Navarra, 1977).

The good acceptance of the fruit and the improvement in agricultural techniques made figs to reach an increasing productivity. According to Maiorano (2010), the peak of the fig tree culture in the Valinhos region was in the mid-1970s, with the implementation of electric energy in rural properties, allowing the improvement of the production process. In order to illustrated that, in 1972, the process of exporting the fruit in the region began, with a total volume of four thousand kilograms. Years later, in 2008, the regions of Valinhos and Campinas exported a total of 1,644,854 kilograms of purple figs (Maiorano, 2010).

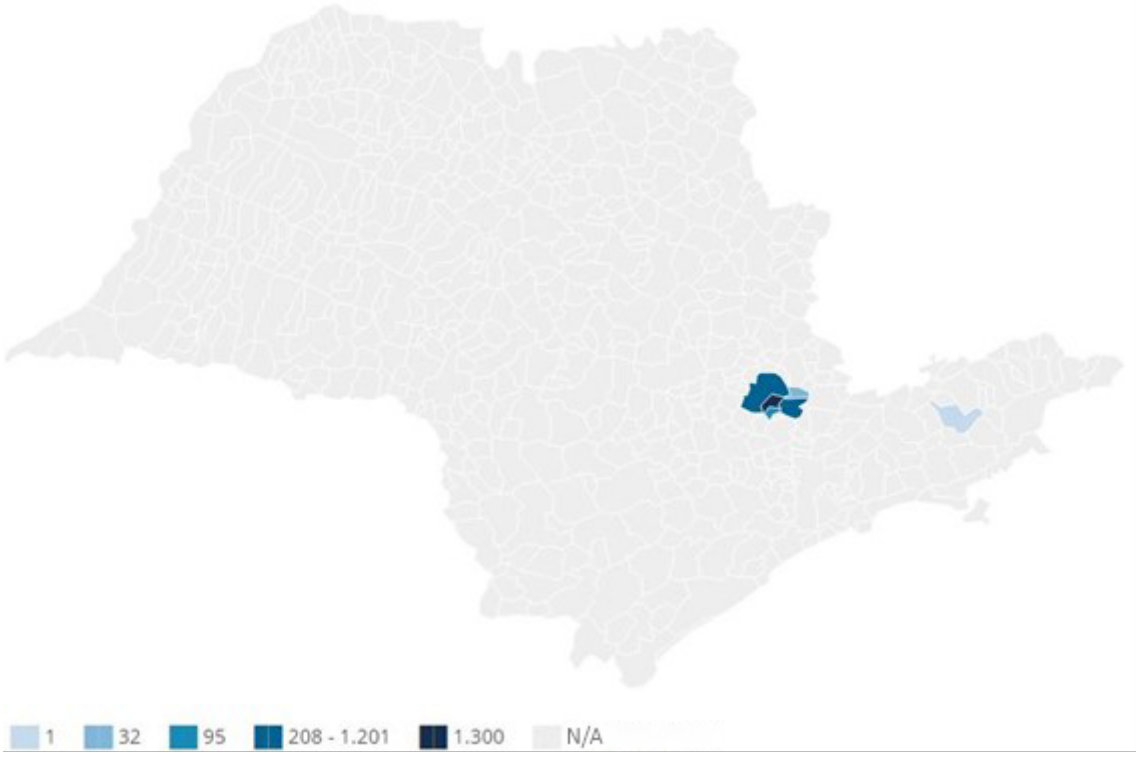
Valinhos and Campinas still concentrate most of the fig production in the state. The analysis of data from the Census of Agriculture (Brasil, 2017) allowed us to verify that, in that year, both municipalities were responsible for 88% of the production of purple figs in São Paulo. Valinhos is the largest producer, most of which is destined for fresh consumption.

The Census of Agriculture (Brasil, 2017) also ranked the municipalities of Valinhos, Itatiba, and Vinhedo as the first, third, and fourth leading fig producers in the entire state of São Paulo, respectively (Figure 2). According to data from this Census, Valinhos had a production of 1,300 t; Itatiba reached 208 t; and Vinhedo totaled 95 t of the fruit. Louveira had no considerable fig production, according to the Census. Together, Valinhos, Itatiba, and Vinhedo reached a total production value of BRL 5,711,000.00.

Finally, it is worth noting that the great importance of fig cultivation is due to numerous factors. It is developed in small properties, generating employment throughout the year; it has a market for fresh consumption in Brazil and abroad; and, when industrialized, it has great acceptance. As for production, it daily takes place between five and six months of the year, generating two to three direct jobs per cultivated hectare, which gives the fruit a high social value, converting it into a considerable source of income (Corrêa; Boliani, 2010).

Such elements demonstrate the great representation of the crop for the regional economy, which, more than 100 years after its introduction, makes the region of Valinhos the largest producer of table figs in the state of São Paulo.

Figure 2 – Figs: quantity (t) produced in the state of São Paulo – 2017



source: Brasil (2017).

The guava crop

As in the case of grapes and figs, the history of the development of guava cultivation in the region of Campinas is related to the international migratory flows towards Brazil during the 20th century. The Japanese colony already planted guava in Campinas and, in the mid-1950s, these people started cultivating it in Valinhos. In 1953, the separation of the old district of Valinhos

from Campinas led the Japanese people to settle in the rural district of Macuco, where they first developed the tomato crop. Nonetheless, due to the damage that this crop caused to the soil, the plantations were soon replaced by guava trees. In the process of improving the crop, the Japanese developed their own pruning, irrigation, and fertilization techniques and, on certain occasions, had technical support from IAC. Such facts led to the origin of different varieties of guava in Valinhos, for example, the varieties *Sassaoka*, *Kumagai*, and *Pedro-Sato* that made Valinhos gradually become nationally known for the production of the fruit, in such a way that the plantations quickly expanded to neighboring municipalities (São Paulo, 2020).

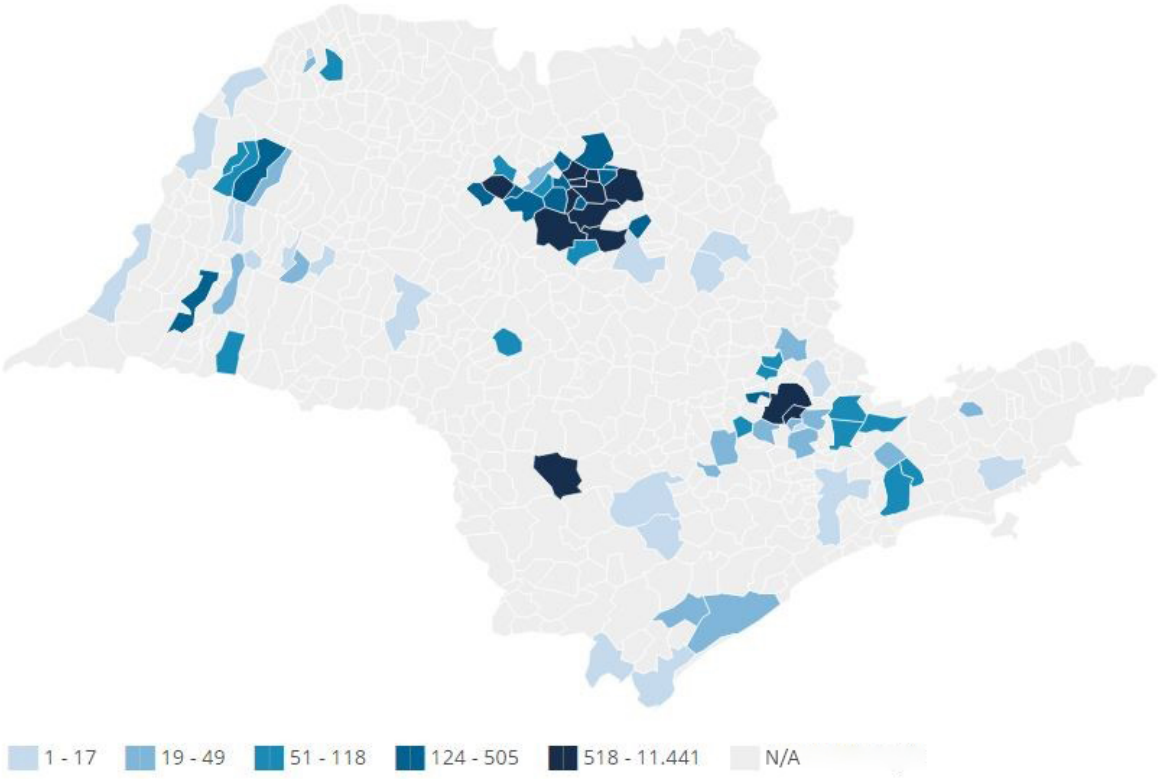
Currently, guava is a prominent fruit in the context of fruit production in Brazil, as it can be used for numerous purposes. In addition to being fresh consumed, it can be sold in the form of sweets, jams, juices, pulps, ice creams, etc.; this versatility provides the producer with different ways of earnings. The region of Campinas is quite traditional in the cultivation of guava, which is produced mainly on small farms. There, the winter is mild and with little rainfall, the summer has pleasant temperatures, is long, and has a good rainfall regime, climatic conditions that favor the development of guava, and the following varieties are common and indicated for planting: *Pedra branca* (or *Branca de Valinhos*, *Branca de Kumagai*, or simply *Kumagai*) and *Ogawa branca*, grown in the region of Valinhos in order to supply the domestic and foreign markets, for fresh consumption. The *Ogawa branca* variety was obtained by cross-breeding the common guava tree with the Australian one. The fruits are large (300 to 700 grams), oval, and have a yellow, slightly wrinkled peel. The pulp is thick and sweet, and has few seeds. Conversely, the *Pedra branca* variety originated from the cross-breeding of the Australian guava with the common local one. It is pear-shaped, weighs between 400 and 500 grams, and its pulp is white and consistent (Gonzaga Neto; Soares, 1995).

The state of São Paulo is among the largest producers of guava in Brazil. According to the Municipal Agricultural Production (*Produção Agrícola Municipal* – PAM) database, in 2018 the state was among the five largest producers of the fruit in Brazil, with a production of 195,406 t, only behind the state of Pernambuco (IBGE, [n.d.]).

The Census of Agriculture (Brasil, 2017) classified the region of Campinas as one of the main producers of guava in São Paulo, highlighting Valinhos, which ranked 6th among the ten largest producers in the state, with a total production of 2,609 t. In the same period, Itatiba produced 49 t, Louveira produced 2 t, and Vinhedo produced 24 t of guava. Together, the four municipalities reached a total production value of BRL 4,723,000.00. In Figure 3, the total produced in São Paulo

Similar to the production of grape and figs, the numbers show that the guava crop has great social and economic weight in the municipalities highlighted in this study. Over time, production techniques related to special pruning, irrigation, and fertilization habits developed by the Japanese colony allowed achieving greater productivity and quality in the crop, in addition to contributing to the emergence of new varieties of the fruit. Such facts placed the municipality of Valinhos, for example, as one of the largest producers of guava in the state. As in the case of grapes and figs, guava began to be celebrated at harvest time, contributing to crystallize rural cultural habits, in addition to establishing its prestige in the socioeconomic aspect for the development of the rural economy in the region.

Figure 3 – Guava: quantity (t) produced in the state of São Paulo – 2017



source: Brasil (2017).

The persimmon crop

Persimmon is a fruit of Asian origin and was introduced in Brazil at the beginning of Japanese immigration in the 20th century. In the 1920s, the Asian people who arrived in the country brought seedlings of persimmon and knowledge about its cultivation, starting the production process on farms that until then were restricted to coffee production. Until that moment, the only varieties of persimmon known in Brazil were the so-called astringent persimmons, which had arrived from France at the end of the 19th century and did not have a very pleasant taste. The varieties from Japan, however, were quite sweet and adapted very well to the climate and soil in Brazil. The persimmon varieties introduced in Brazil by the Japanese people are characterized by their rustic trees with deciduous leaves that fall in the fall-winter period. From the month of August onwards, the plants strongly sprout and bloom. In Brazil, almost all fruit production is intended for fresh consumption. Nevertheless, the fruit can be processed and used in an industrial-artisanal way for the manufacture of vinegars, raisins, and sweets. Persimmon has a good domestic market and good prospects for export purposes (IAC, 1998; Vieira, 2019).

Nowadays, the Brazilian production is quite large, and the fruit is even exported. More than ten varieties are produced in Brazil, including *Chocolate*, *Fuyu*, *Hachiya*, and *Jirô*, with a sweet taste, and *Giombô*, *Kyoto*, *Taubaté*, and *Rama forte*, which are astringent and therefore need post-harvest treatment to become edible. The astringency in the persimmon pulp is determined by the tannin, a substance that produces a bitter taste in the mouth and that, in nature, serves to repel herbivores and harmful microorganisms (Vieira, 2019).

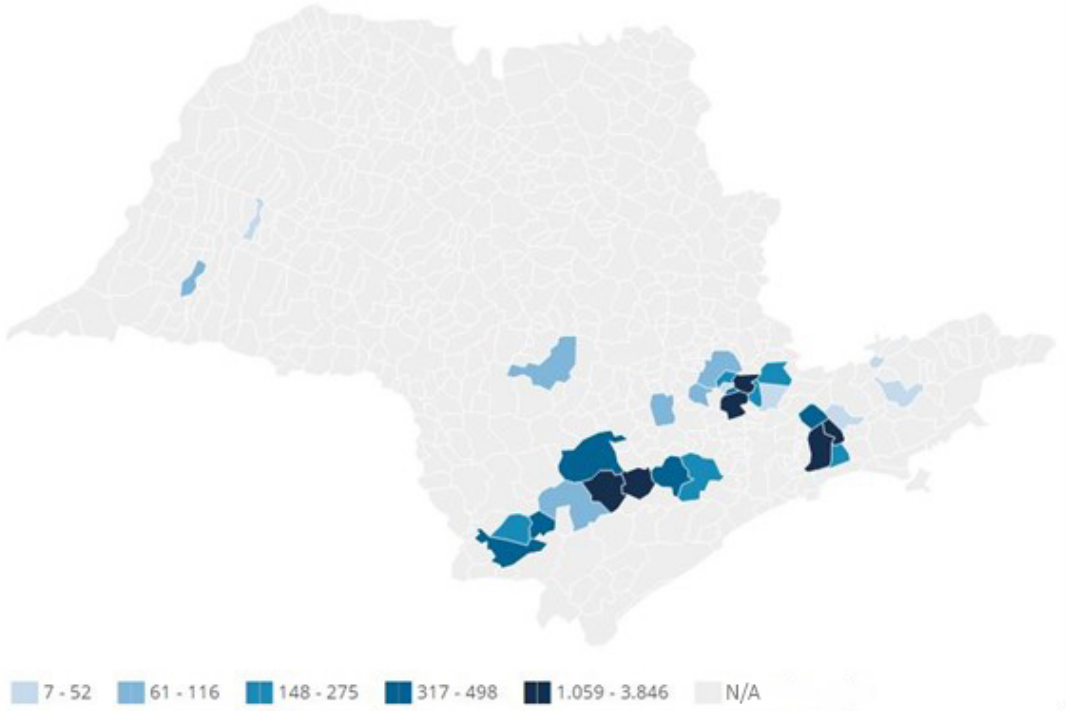
Currently, the world's largest producers of persimmons are China, South Korea, and Japan, with 86% of the world production and 96% of cultivated area. In Brazil, the area cultivated with persimmon corresponds to 8,858 ha, with production concentrated in the Southeast, South, and Northeast, with the states of São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, Rio Grande do Sul, and Minas Gerais being the largest national producers. The average productivity of persimmon is around 22.4 t/ha, especially in the state of São Paulo, where it reaches 28.5 t/ha, due to the greater use of technology in farming. The main fruit producing regions in São Paulo are the municipalities of Mogi das Cruzes, Sorocaba, Campinas, Itapetininga, and Itapeva, which concentrate 93% of the state production of persimmon (TECCHIO; PEREIRA; MOTTA, 2019).

In the Campinas region, Itatiba has established itself as the largest producer of the fruit, with emphasis on the *Rama forte* — with a reddish peel and yellow-brown pulp with a soft consistency — and *Taubaté* — with a reddish peel and yellow pulp and a soft consistency, marked by its tannin characteristic — varieties. There are not many records on how the crop of persimmon was established in the rural area of the municipality. However, information from the news portal *Revista Rural* (Persimmon..., 2008) shows that descendants of Italians, who at first planted the *Niágara* variety, decided, from the 1960s onwards, to start planting persimmon seedlings, a crop that requires little investment, employs little workforce, and uses few pesticides. Navarra (1977) had also found persimmon plantations in the rural neighborhood of Mombuca, in Itatiba, between the 1950s and 1960s, when the author carried out field studies in the municipality, noting the development of the crop in small agricultural properties of descendants of Italian immigrants.

The Census of Agriculture (Brasil, 2017) showed the notability of São Paulo in the production of persimmons. In that year, the state produced a total of 19,507 t of the fruit (Figure 4). Of this volume, Itatiba contributed with 1,113 t, ranking 5th among the ten municipalities with the highest production in the state. In the same period, Louveira produced 334 t; Valinhos, 220 t; and Vinhedo, 37 t. The total value of production reached by the four municipalities was around BRL 1,952,000.00, which denotes the economic dimension of this crop for the region.

Despite not being directly linked to the process of Italian immigration in the region, as was the case with grapes and figs, the cultivation of persimmon has been gaining prominence in the regional socioeconomic context. Overall, it is planted on family properties inherited by descendants of Italian immigrants who arrived at the end of the 19th century, using very traditional methods of cultivation. Moreover, as in the case of grapes, figs, and guava, there are already festivals to celebrate the harvest and promote the product, an element that contributes to strengthening rural cultural habits, in addition to valuing the work of small farmers.

Figure 4 – Persimmon: quantity (t) produced in the state of São Paulo – 2017



source: Brasil (2017).

Final considerations

The importance of producing fruits, such as persimmon, grapes, figs, and guava, for the municipalities of Itatiba, Louveira, Valinhos, and Vinhedo goes far beyond the merely economic aspect. Despite being great generators of production value in the countryside, these crops are directly related to the way rural society is organized in these municipalities. As highlighted, the greater diversification of agricultural production in this region of São Paulo is directly linked to the beginning of the immigration of Italians and other nationalities at the end of the 19th century. These immigrants came to work on the state's large coffee farms, encouraged by a subsidized immigration program. However, the numerous crises that coffee underwent during the 20th century, especially the Crisis of 1929, opened the possibility for immigrants who had some savings to acquire their piece of land, considering that large coffee farms began to be parceled out and sold.

Henceforth, a series of changes can be observed in the organization of the agrarian context in the regions of Campinas and Jundiaí, as products that were not cultivated before gained space, for instance, fruits such as grapes, persimmons, figs, and guava — which, over time, made municipalities like Itatiba, Louveira, Valinhos, and Vinhedo well known for the quality of the produced fruit. The outstanding role of fruit production in the region transcends the economic aspect, as it is related to the sociocultural organization, with the transmission of habits and traditions from generation to generation through the work performed in the field. In addition to providing income, the fruit harvest gives rise to large festivals and serves to consolidate habits and traditions of the countryside, making the "rural" a valuable part of the history of society and with strong links to regional popular culture.

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