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THE CENTRAL AMERICAN RUBBER  
TREE. ISSUED OCTOBER 1,1903**

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**O. F. COOK**

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PLANTED CASTILLA TREES ABOUT 14 YEARS OLD.

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE.

BUREAU OF PLANT INDUSTRY—BULLETIN No. 49.

B. T. GALLOWAY, Chief of Bureau.

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# THE CULTURE OF THE CENTRAL AMERICAN RUBBER TREE.

BY

O. F. COOK,

BOTANIST IN CHARGE OF INVESTIGATIONS IN TROPICAL AGRICULTURE.

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BOTANICAL INVESTIGATIONS AND EXPERIMENTS.

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ISSUED OCTOBER 1, 1903.



WASHINGTON:  
GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE.  
1903.

## BUREAU OF PLANT INDUSTRY.

B. T. GALLOWAY, *Chief of Bureau.*

### BOTANICAL INVESTIGATIONS AND EXPERIMENTS.

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## LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

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U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE,  
BUREAU OF PLANT INDUSTRY,  
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF,  
*Washington, D. C., July 7, 1903.*

SIR: I have the honor to transmit herewith, and to recommend for publication as Bulletin No. 49 of the series of this Bureau, the accompanying paper entitled "The Culture of the Central American Rubber Tree." It is especially opportune at this time that correct information should be disseminated on this subject, as interested parties have spread many delusive reports with a view to encouraging enterprises designed to exploit the rubber industry. Under these circumstances accurate and reliable information should be accessible to all classes of our citizens. This paper was prepared by Mr. O. F. Cook, Botanist in Charge of Investigations in Tropical Agriculture, and has been submitted by the Botanist with a view to publication.

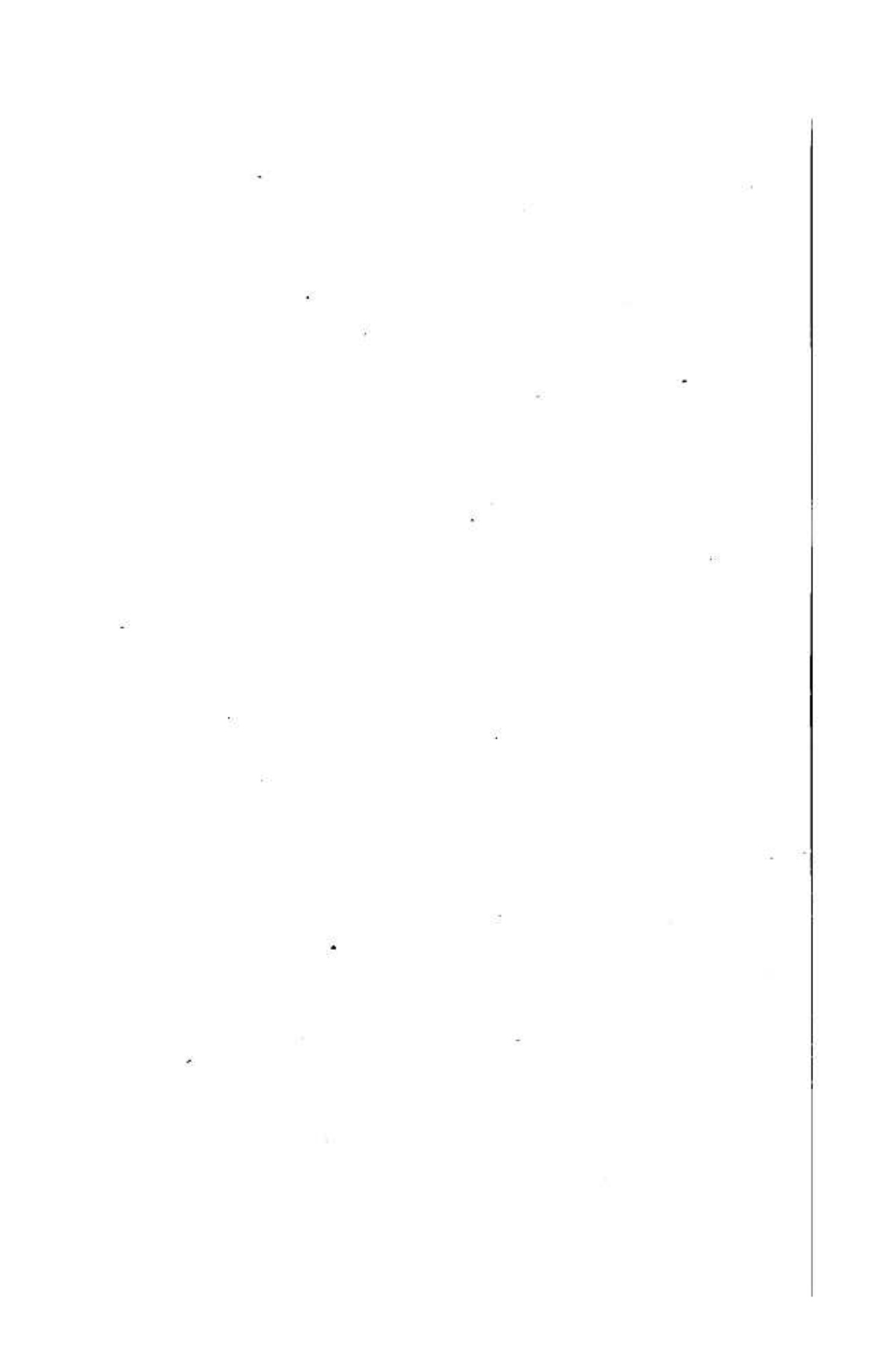
The eighteen half-tone illustrations are considered necessary to a complete understanding of the text of this Bulletin.

Respectfully,

B. T. GALLOWAY,  
*Chief of Bureau.*

HON. JAMES WILSON,  
*Secretary of Agriculture.*





## P R E F A C E.

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In the year 1902 the United States imported coffee to the value of \$70,982,155, sugar<sup>a</sup> \$55,061,097, and crude rubber \$24,899,230. The imports of crude rubber for the last five years were valued as follows:

1898.....	\$25,386,010
1899.....	31,707,630
1900.....	31,376,867
1901.....	28,455,383
1902.....	24,899,230
Total.....	141,825,120
Average.....	28,365,024

After sugar and coffee, crude rubber is the largest of the tropical imports of the United States, and it is the only one of these three for which we are still entirely dependent on foreign countries. Rubber culture is also the tropical industry in which the largest foreign investment of American capital has been made, and this is far larger than that of any other country.

The present paper on "The Culture of the Central American Rubber Tree" is the result of a preliminary study of rubber culture in Guatemala and Southern Mexico by Mr. O. F. Cook, Botanist in Charge of Investigations in Tropical Agriculture, who has already left for a second visit to Central America and Mexico, during which further attention will be devoted to the same subject.

These studies are directed primarily to the question whether rubber culture is promising for Porto Rico and the Philippines, and the principal fact established in this report, that a continuously humid climate is neither essential nor even desirable for rubber culture, promises well for the extension of this industry to the tropical islands of the United States. As a basis of effort in this direction the more important results of the experiments which have been made with the Para and other rubber trees in the East Indies and elsewhere have been brought together, with explanations of their possible bearing upon the culture of the Central American rubber tree.

The paper will have, however, a more immediate and popular interest in connection with the subject of investments in rubber culture,

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<sup>a</sup>Not including imports from Hawaii and Porto Rico.

upon which this Department continues to receive a large amount of correspondence of a character which it has been very difficult to treat satisfactorily by letter.

A large proportion of the notes and illustrations used in the present paper were secured in the Soconusco district of Southern Mexico on the estate of the La Zacualpa Rubber Plantation Company, through whose hospitality and numerous courtesies the work of Mr. Cook was greatly facilitated.

FREDERICK V. COVILLE,  
*Botanist.*

OFFICE OF BOTANICAL INVESTIGATIONS  
AND EXPERIMENTS,  
*Washington, D. C., May 18, 1903.*