

Avocado

Persea americana

Avocados need excellent drainage. Full sun is preferred. Avocados are self-pollinating and bear in one to four years, depending upon the size of the avocado tree at purchase. For cooler areas of Brevard County there are more cold tolerant varieties to choose from. To help in making your decision, consult the chart on the back of this handout, the information signs attached to the individual trees, and the nursery professionals here at Rockledge Gardens.

General considerations for home planting of avocado trees include adequate space for growth, maximum exposure to sunlight, good air circulation, and adequate irrigation and drainage. When planting more than one avocado, space them 15 to 25 feet apart.

If your yard tends to stay wet during the rainy season, it is very important to build a berm and plant your tree on it to allow for drainage. In extreme conditions, better drainage can be accomplished by making a large hole and using coarse sand to back fill the hole. When the ground is hard-packed due to the presence of hardpan or marl, **gypsum** should be incorporated into the planting mix.

Planting Instructions:

Given good drainage, the tree is adapted to a wide range of soils. The object in preparing the soil is to make it porous, yet still have water holding capabilities. Prepare the soil by adding 1 part organic matter—such as our **Rockledge Gardens Planting Mix**—to 2 parts existing soil. Use this mix to back fill the hole. Add **Espoma Citrus-Tone** when planting. **Bio-Tone Starter Plus** can also be added to the planting mix. These organic products will stimulate root growth for quicker establishment.

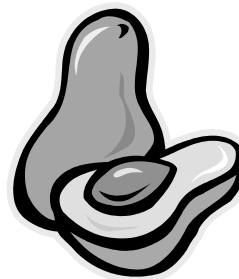
The planting hole should be wider, but no deeper, than the root ball. When planted, the tree should be no higher or lower in the ground than it was in the pot.

When removing the tree from the container, use care: do this right next to the hole you have just prepared. Examine the tree roots closely for injury. If any of the roots are crushed or broken, cut them at a point just inside of the injury. If there are roots encircling more than one-third of the root ball, cut these by making 3 vertical cuts spaced equally around the rootball. This will not harm the tree if it is properly watered. Prune any broken branches just beyond the collar. If some of the dirt should fall off of the rootball, don't panic. Carefully place the tree into the hole and backfill with your mixture.

Eliminate air pockets by using a gentle stream of water from a hose. Form a ridge of soil 2 to 3 inches high around the margin of the hole to serve as a reservoir when watering.

Watering:

When temperatures are in the 80s, water your tree daily the first two weeks by filling the water reservoir (or use two gallons of water per inch of trunk diameter). In cooler weather, water every other day. Weeks 3 and 4, water every other day (twice a week in cooler weather). Continue in two week stages until you're applying water only once per week. During periods of drought, you should supply even mature trees with an inch of water weekly. Avocado trees should not be watered with water from wells containing 2,200 ppm or more of salt.



Fertilization:

After planting, wait about one month before fertilizing. Then apply **Sunniland Citrus Fertilizer** 3 times per year (March, June and September) in the amount of one pound (approximately 2 cups) per inch of trunk diameter or per foot of canopy width, whichever is greater.

Spray the tree with **Maxicrop Liquid Seaweed** or **Neptune's Harvest Liquid Fish & Seaweed** at least twice a year in March and November to boost the immune system of the tree, making it more resistant to insect and fungal problems. *Never use "weed and feed" products near your tree!* the first few years, then twice per year when mature. Apply **Key Plex** or **Minor Element Nutritional Spray** once per year in spring.

Type:

Avocado trees are classified 'A' or 'B' type. An 'A' or 'B' type will produce by itself, but avocado trees produce heavier crops when an 'A' and a 'B' type are planted in close proximity.

Pests & Diseases:

The best advice for insect and disease control is to prevent problems by following good cultural practices as outlined above. Drought-stressed, badly planted, and improperly fertilized plants are more susceptible to pest and disease problems than well-nourished plants. **Anthracnose** is the most common fungal disease seen in avocados. The disease is evidenced by small dark round spots that occur on the leaves, usually at the start of the rainy season. Left untreated, the disease will spread to the fruit as well. Two to three weekly applications of **Dithane** should stop the disease from further spread.

Rockledge Gardens



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Avocado Varieties

Variety Name	Season	Size (ozs)	Color	Shape	Type	Cold Tolerance	Notes
Brogdon	July 15 – Sep 15	7-20	purple to black	oval to pear-shaped & pebbled	B	22 ^o	tree small to medium & moderately vigorous; moderately productive; very hardy variety but susceptible to anthracnose; creamy, delicious, rich, nutty flavor; very similar to Haas
Choquette	Nov 15 – Feb 15	24-40	dark green	oval & smooth	A	26 ^o	medium-sized spreading tree; very productive (bears heavily in alternate years); fairly resistant to disease; mild flavor; 13% oil content
Day	Jul 15 – Sep 15	8-16	green	pear-shaped & smooth	A	22-25 ^o	slender tree; very productive; fruit has buttery consistency and a delicious, nutty flavor
Hall	Nov 15 – Feb 15	20-30	dark green	pear-shaped & smooth	B	29 ^o	tree is hardy and very productive; subject to scab; 12-14% oil content
Hass (Florida)	harvest peak in January		green	pear-shaped & pebbled	?	25 ^o	rich nutty, buttery taste similar to Haas, close to 20% oil content; 80% of California avocados are Hass!
Lula	Nov 15 – Feb 15	16-24	green	round & smooth	A	25-28 ^o	tree tall, dense, broad, upright & prolific; rapid-growing; productive; bears when young; susceptible to avocado scab; 12-16% oil content; former leading commercial variety)
Marcus Pumpkin	Oct 1 – Dec 1	30-48	green	round	B	25 ^o	moderate yield; very mild flavor
Monroe	Nov 15 – Jan 15	26-36	dark green	round/oval & pebbled	B	26 ^o	heavy bearer; nutty flavor; 10-14% oil content
Oro Negro	Nov – Jan	16-32	black	round/oval & smooth	B	unknown	probably a Monroe crossed with a Mexican type, this new variety is rich & buttery with a creamy texture
Pollock	August - Sept	18-40	green	pear-shaped & smooth	B	28 ^o	thin-skinned; rich flavor; excellent quality; light production
Russell	July – August	24-40	green	long, club-shaped & smooth	A	28 ^o	excellent fruit quality; popular among Latin communities of South Florida; high yields
Simmonds	July – August	16-34	green	oval & smooth	A	28 ^o	good production; excellent eating quality
Winter Mexican	Oct 1 – Dec 1	12-18	dark green	oval & rough	B	22-24 ^o	attractive spreading tree; very vigorous; heavy & regular bearer; resistant to scab; susceptible to anthracnose; up to 30% oil content

Mexican type avocados new to Florida, all extremely cold hardy (we'll post more information on them as we get it)

Brazos Belle	Oct - Nov	large 4-5"	black	smooth & oval to pear shaped	self	14 ^o	delicious taste; creamy texture; high oil content; tree is a good producer
Fantastic	?	?	green	?	?	<10 ^o	grows like a weed!; high oil content; great taste; delicious and creamy; paper-thin skin; eat skin & all!;most cold hardy of all the avocados we sell
Joey	late Sept	medium	black	egg-shaped & smooth	?	<10 ^o	high oil content; heavy producer; excellent flavor; heavy bearing tree
Lila	Sept - Oct	medium	green	smooth squatty pear	?	14 ^o	good quality taste; high oil content
Mexicola	August – Sept	4-8	purple black	round to pear-shaped/shiny	A	18 ^o	tree tall, spreading & vigorous; delicious; highest quality flesh with high oil content; paper-thin skin; very cold hardy
Mexicola Grande	Sept - Nov	4-12	black	smooth/shiny long pear	A self	<20 ^o	not related to Mexicola at all; similar to Mexicola in taste, not as extreme as Haas; rich, nutty, excellent flavor, thin skin; small seed
Poncho	?	med-lg	lime green	round/smooth	?	15 ^o	excellent quality; good producer