

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 **Rockledge Gardens Planting Mix**—to 2 parts existing soil. Use this mix to back fill the hole. Add **Espoma Tree-Tone** when planting. Mix **Espoma Bio-tone Starter** in soil when planting. This helps stimulate healthy root growth.

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 root ball, 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 peri-

ods 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 then apply **Sunniland Citrus Fertilizer** 3 times per year (March, June and September) in the amount of 2 cups per foot of height.

Spray the tree with **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.** Apply **Minor Element Citrus Nutritional Spray** once 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 **Maneb** 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
<b>Bernicker</b> popular with commercial and home growers	Aug - Oct	24-40	green	pear shaped	A	
<b>Brogdon</b> tree small to medium & moderately vigorous; moderately productive; generally sets fruit in 3 <sup>rd</sup> year; very hardy variety but susceptible to anthracnose; delicious, nutty flavor (recommended for central Florida); very similar to Haas	July 15 – Sep 15	7-20	purple	somewhat pear-shaped & pebbled	B	22°
<b>Choquette</b> medium-sized spreading tree; very productive (bears heavily in alternate years); fairly resistant to disease; mild nutty flavor; 13% oil content (of major commercial importance in Florida)	Nov 15 – Feb 15	24-40	dark green	oval & smooth	A	26°
<b>Day</b> slender tree; very productive; fruit has buttery consistency and a delicious, nutty flavor	Jul 15 – Sep 15	8-16	green	pear to club-shaped & smooth	A	22-25°
<b>Hall</b> tree is hardy and very productive; subject to scab; 12-14% oil content	Nov 15 – Feb 15	20-30	dark green	pear-shaped & smooth	B	29°
<b>Lula</b> tree tall, vigorous, dense, broad, upright & prolific; rapid-growing; productive (regular bearer); bears when young; susceptible to avocado scab; 12-16% oil content (successful in central and southern Fl; former leading commercial variety)	Nov 15 – Feb 15	16-24	green	round & smooth	A	25-28°
<b>Marcus Pumpkin</b> moderate yield; very mild flavor	Oct 1 – Dec 1	30-48	green	round	B	25°
<b>Monroe</b> heavy bearer; nutty flavor; 10-14% oil content	Nov 15 – Jan 15	26-36	dark green	round to oval & pebbled	B	26°
<b>Pollock</b> superior quality fruit; 3-5% oil; vigorous tree; leading commercial & personal variety	Jun 25 – Sep 1	18-40	light green	oblong to pear-shape	B	
<b>Simmonds</b>	Jun 25 – Sep 15	16-34	green		A	
<b>Winter Mexican</b> large attractive spreading tree; very vigorous; heavy & regular bearer; fruit quality not as good as other varieties; resistant to scab; susceptible to anthracnose; up to 30% oil content	Oct 1 – Dec 1	12-18	dark green	oval & rough	B	22-24°