

# Avocado

## Info Sheet

### *Persea americana*

Native to Mexico and Central America, avocados have been part of the human diet for at least 12,000 years. The health benefits of eating this fruit (botanically, actually, a berry) are now well-known and avocados are grown throughout the tropics and sub-tropics.

Avocados need excellent drainage. Full sun is preferred. Avocados are mostly 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 backfill 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 1 part existing soil. Use this mix to backfill the hole. Add **Espoma Bio-Tone Starter Plus** to the planting mix. This organic product 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 2200 or more parts per million (ppm) 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-half pound (approximately 1 cup) per foot of tree height.

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!** Apply **Key Plex** or **Minor Element Nutritional Spray** once per year in spring for the first few years, then twice per year when mature.

### 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.

The logo for Rockledge Gardens features the name in a large, teal, serif font. The word 'Rockledge' is on the top line and 'Gardens' is on the bottom line. A stylized teal leaf or wave graphic is positioned behind the 'G' in 'Gardens'.

Naturally beautiful and fun!

2153 U.S. Hwy # 1 • Rockledge, FL 32955  
321.636.7662 • [www.rockledgegardens.com](http://www.rockledgegardens.com)

# Avocado Varieties

M = Mexican

G = Guatemalan

WI = West Indian

Variety Name	Season	Size (ozs)	Color	Shape	Type	Cold Tolerance	Notes
Brogdon M x WI	July 15 – Sep 15	7-20	purple to black	oval to pear-shaped & pebbled	A/B	22º	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 G x WI	Nov 15 – Feb 15	24-40	dark green	oval & smooth	A	26º	medium-sized spreading tree; very productive (bears heavily in alternate years); fairly resistant to disease; mild flavor; 13% oil content
Day G x WI	Jul 15 – Sep 15	8-16	green	pear-shaped & smooth	A	22-25º	slender tree; very productive; fruit has buttery consistency and a delicious, nutty flavor
Hall G x WI	Nov 15 – Feb 15	20-30	dark green	pear-shaped & smooth	B	29º	tree is hardy and very productive; subject to scab; 12-14% oil content; large & tasty; alternate but heavy bearer
Hass (Florida) G x M	harvest peak in January		black	pear-shaped & pebbled	A	25º	rich nutty, buttery taste similar to Haas, close to 20% oil content; 80% of California avocados are Hass!
Lula G x M	Nov 15 – Feb 15	16-24	green	round & smooth	A	25-28º	tree tall, dense, broad, upright & prolific; rapid-growing; productive; bears when young; 12-16% oil content; former leading commercial variety)
Marcus Pumpkin M x WI	Oct 1 – Dec 1	30-48	green	round	B	25º	Very large fruit; moderate yield; very mild yet excellent flavor; former commercial variety but better suited for residential planting
Monroe G x WI	Nov 15 – Jan 15	26-36	dark green	round/oval & pebbled	B	26º	consistent heavy bearer of large fruit; very good quality fruit with a nutty flavor; 10-14% oil content; tree growth more upright rather than spreading
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 WI	August - Sept	18-40	green	pear-shaped & smooth	B	28º	thin-skinned; rich flavor; excellent quality; very vigorous tree; light production
Russell WI	July – August	24-40	green	long, smooth & club-shaped	A	28º	excellent fruit quality; popular among Latin communities of South Florida; high yields
Simmonds WI	July – August	16-34	green	oval & smooth	A	28º	good production; excellent eating quality
Winter Mexican M x WI	Oct 1 – Dec 1	12-18	dark green	oval & rough	B	22-24º	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)

Bacon M	Nov - Jan	8-14	green	oval & smooth	B	24º	creamy; good quality taste with nutty aftertaste; thin-skinned & easy to peel; fruit yields to gentle pressure when ripe
Brazos Belle M	Oct - Nov	large 4-5"	black	smooth & oval to pear shaped	self	14º	delicious taste; creamy texture; high oil content; tree is a good producer
Fantastic M	July-August	8-14	green	smooth paper thin skin	?	<10º	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 M	late Sept - Oct	medium	black	egg-shaped & pebbled	?	<10º	high oil content; heavy producer; excellent flavor; heavy bearing tree; excellent flavor; heavy bearer
Lila M	Sept - Oct	medium	green	squatly pear & pebbled	?	14º	good quality taste; high oil content
Mexicola M	August – Oct	4-8	purple black	round to pear-shaped/shiny	A	18º	tree tall; spreading & vigorous; delicious; highest quality flesh with high oil content; paper-thin skin; very cold hardy
Mexicola Grande M	Sept - Nov	4-12	black	smooth/shiny long pear	A self	<20º	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 M	July-August	med-lg	lime green	round/smooth	?	15º	excellent quality; good producer