**Avocado - *Persea americana***

[[](https://toptropicals.com/pics/garden/2004/5/5020.jpg)](https://toptropicals.com/pics/garden/2004/5/5020.jpg)The name 'Avocado' originates from the Aztec name ahuacacuauhitl meaning testicle tree!

The avocado is a dense, evergreen tree, shedding many leaves in early spring. It is fast growing, and generally branches to form a broad tree. Some cultivars are columnar, others selected for nearly prostrate form. Growth is in frequent flushes during warm weather in southern regions with only one long flush per year in cooler areas.

Grafted plants normally produce fruit within one to two years compared to 8 - 20 years for seedlings.

Avocado flowers are crosspollinated which means that developing independent genetic lines is difficult. In fact, crosspollination is promoted in the flowers by the stigma of a flower being receptive to pollen prior to pollen being released from that same flower. Avocado trees produce thousands of flowers and only about one in 5000 sets fruit. Considering it originated from South American forests, the Avocado is remarkable in its ability to thrive under a broad range of environmental conditions. It needs water and no frost and prefers unleached, nonacid soils, sun, and dry air.

The flesh of avocados is deep green near the skin, becoming yellowish nearer the single large, inedible ovoid seed. The flesh is hard when harvested but softens to a buttery texture. Wind-caused abrasion can scar the skin, forming cracks which extend into the flesh. "Cukes" are seedless, pickle-shaped fruits. Off-season fruit should not be harvested with the main crop, but left on the tree to mature. Seeds may sprout within an avocado when it is over-mature, causing internal molds and breakdown.

High in monosaturates, the oil content of avocados is second only to olives among fruits, and sometimes greater. Clinical feeding studies in humans have shown that avocado oil can reduce blood cholesterol. The Avocado fruit is an important food in South America and is nutritious with high levels of mainly unsaturated oils, minerals, vitamins and reasonable levels of protein. The oil is evidently similar in composition to olive oil.

**Types of Avocado**

**W - West Indian type** avocados produce enormous, smooth round, glossy green fruits that are low in oil and weigh up to 2 pounds. They are summer- or fall-ripening. They have leathery, pliable, non-granular skin. The leaves are not aromatic. Grown in Florida, West Indies, Bahamas, Bermuda, and the tropics of the Old World. Not grown in California.

**G - Guatemalan types** produce medium ovoid or pear-shaped, pebbled green fruits that turn blackish-green when ripe. Guatemalan avocadoes are primarily winter and spring ripening. Skin varies from thin to very thick and is granular or gritty. The flesh is rich in flavor and relatively high in oil content. Grown in both Florida and California.

**M - Mexican varieties** - the fruit of are small (6 - 10 ounces) with paper-thin skins that turn glossy green or black when ripe. The tender skin clings to the flesh. The flesh has a high oil content, up to 30%. Leaves have a pronounced anise-like scent and are favored for cooking. The tree is more cold-resistant.

**Avocado varieties available from Top Tropicals**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Picture** | **Name of variety** | **Ripening Season** | **Plant size** | **Production** | **Fruit Shape / Size** | **fruit color** | **Cold tolerance** | **Comments** | **Type** | **Place of Origin** |
| [no pic](https://toptropicals.com/pics/garden/10/km/PICT4288.jpg) | **Brazos Belle** | October-November |  |  | medium-large, long | purple-black | Very cold hardy | Produces medium-large, purple-black long fruit. Season: October-November. Can take temperatures down to 15F for short period of time without significant damage. | M | Texas |
| [no pic](https://toptropicals.com/pics/garden/10/km/PICT4285.jpg) | **Brogdon** | late summer-fall | small to medium tree, medium vigor | low productivity | pear-shaped 7 to 15 Oz | red-purple | very high | Brogdon has red-purple colored pear-shaped fruit. Weight 7 to 15 Oz. Skin is very thin. Yellow buttery flesh. It is an excellent choice for guacamole lovers. Fruit ripens in late summer-fall. Very cold hardy. Good for Central Florida. Originated in Winter have, Florida, by Tom Brogdon. | **M** | Florida |
| [no pic](https://toptropicals.com/pics/garden/04/3000/2574.jpg) | **Choquette** | January to March | medium size tree | bears heavily in alternate years | oval, very large  30-40 Oz | dark green, slightly leathery | low | Choquette is a late season favorite Florida avocado producing very large fruits. 30-40 Oz fruit. Skin glossy, smooth, dark green, slightly leathery. Flesh thick, yellow, very good quality. Oil content 13%. Seed medium , tight. Resistant to common avocado diseases. Recommended for home plantings in Florida. This avocado is where quality intersects quantity, and it is quickly becoming a favorite to Florida’s winter residents. | **GxW** | Florida |
| [no pic](https://toptropicals.com/pics/garden/10/km/PICT4329.jpg) | **Day** | July through September | slender tree |  | shaped like a club | green, smooth skin | high | Day avocado is green, smooth skin and is shaped like a club. The fruit is of very good quality and has a nice buttery consistency. The slender tree is very cold tolerant and produces July through September. |  |  |
| [no pic](https://toptropicals.com/pics/garden/10/km/PICT4282.jpg) | **Fantastic** |  |  |  |  | green, paper thin skin | Very cold hardy | Very cold hardy variety, supposedly the most most cold hardy of all avocados. Produces green, paper thin skin. The fruit has a creamy texture. Can take temperatures down to 15F for short period of time without significant damage. | M | Texas |
| [no pic](https://toptropicals.com/pics/garden/10/km/PICT4283.jpg) | **Fuerte** | November to June | Vigorous spreading tree | decidedly alternate year bearing habit | pear-shaped, small to medium, elongated,  8-16 Oz | Green, Skin slightly rough | very high | Avocado Fuerte, very cold hardy variety. Green fruit, elongated, 8-16 Oz. Skin slightly rough, thin, not adherent to flesh. Flesh green near skin, oil content 12-17%. Flavor excellent, buttery. Seedc medium to large. Vigorous spreading tree with decidedly alternate year bearing habit. Ripens November to June. Often used for cocktail avocadoes. Natural hybrid originated at Atlixco, Mexico. | **GxM** | Mexico |
| [no pic](https://toptropicals.com/pics/garden/04/3000/2576.jpg) | **Golden** |  |  |  | round medium size | yellow | very high | Local Florida variety originated in Wauchula, which is cold place, comparing to South Florida. This variety survived winter of 2009 in Wauchula, when temperature dropped to low 20sF, without any significant damages. Very unusual medium size fruit - round yellow and smooth skin; creamy-yellow flesh. | **G** | Florida |
| [no pic](https://toptropicals.com/pics/garden/m1/raznozw/avocado3126.jpg) | **Hall** | November-December | medium-size | alternate but heavy bearer | pear shaped | bright green | very high | Large, tasty pear shaped fruit. Skin bright green, attractive, smooth, fairly thick. Flesh deep yellow, oil content 12-16%, seed medium-large, tight. Excellent for the limited fancy-fruit market. An alternate but heavy bearer. Tree exhibits excellent tolerance to the cold. Originated in Miami, Florida, by Willis Hall. | **GxW** | Florida |
| [no pic](https://toptropicals.com/pics/garden/09/km/P4081938.jpg) | **Hass** | Summer | medium-size | Heavy bearing Starts bearing the second year | Pear-sheped to ovoid | black | Average | The Hass avocado is dark-colored with a rough and bumpy skin. Will turn black when ripe. Medium size, 10 Oz. Flesh creamy, flavor excellent, no fiber, oil content 18-25%. It is renowned for is rich nutty flavor and high oil content. Skin leathery, rough, dark purple to black when ripe, thick. Seed small, tight in cavity. Keeping qualities excellent, good shipper. Heavy bearing. Starts bearing the second year. Leading commercial cultivar in California. This is the most popular commercially grown variety. The trees do have a wide range, and can be grown in the southern regions of Texas, Louisiana, and Florida. | **M** | California |
| . [no pic](https://toptropicals.com/pics/garden/10/km/PICT4286.jpg) | **Joey** | September-October |  |  | medium size, egg shaped | purple-black | Very cold hardy | Selected by Joey Ricers in Uvalde, Texas. Produces medium size, egg shaped purple-black fruit. It has excellent flavor. Heavy bearer. Season: September-October. Can take temperatures down to 15F for short period of time without significant damage. | M | Texas |
| [no pic](https://toptropicals.com/pics/garden/10/km/PICT4283.jpg) | **Lila** | September-October |  |  | medium size | green | Very cold hardy | Produces medium size, green fruit. Season: September-October. Don't confuse this variety with Lula, which is popular in Florida and used for rootstock (that one is cold hardy to only 25F). Can take temperatures down to 15F for short period of time without significant damage. | M | Texas |
| [no pic](https://toptropicals.com/pics/garden/fruit/0690.jpg) | **Lula** | November-December | Tree is tall, vigorous, upright | bears early and heavily | pear-shaped, sometimes with a neck, medium-large | green | very high | Fruit pear-shaped, sometimes with a neck, medium-large. Skin almost smooth. Flesh pale to greenish-yellow. Oil content 12-16%. Seed large, tight. Season medium-late (November-December). Tree is tall, bears early and heavily. Cold-resistant, successful in Central and South Florida where it is a formerly the leading commercial cultivar. More frost resistant than most. It is renowned for its ability to endure harsh winters, and for its exceptionally long harvesting period. This makes Lula an exceptional choice for homeowners in and around Orlando. Originated from seed from parent tree planted 1915 by Mrs. Lula Cellon at Miami, Florida | **GxM** | Florida |
| [no pic](https://toptropicals.com/pics/garden/m1/raznozw/awokado2.jpg) | **Mexicola** | August to October |  | Bear early and regularly | spherical to pyriform, very small  3-5 Oz | black, smooth | very high | Very small fruit 3-5 Oz. Skin black, thin, smooth. Excellent flavor. Seed large. Very heat- and cold-resistant. It is the most cold hardy variety, may withstand temperatures in the low 20s. Much used as a parent in California breeding programs. Originated at Pasadena, California. | **M** | California |
| [no pic](https://toptropicals.com/pics/garden/m1/raznozw/awokado2.jpg) | **Mexicola Grande** | August to October |  | Bear early and regularly | spherical to pyriform, very small  3-5 Oz | black, smooth | very cold hardy | This variety is similar to Mexicola but much larger fruit. It survived temperatures around 10F near San Antonio, Texas (Zone 8b). Can take temperatures down to 15F for short period of time without significant damage. | **M** | Texas |
| [no pic](https://toptropicals.com/pics/garden/09/km/P4091941.jpg) | **Nishikawa** | December-January | Vigorous and upright |  | Oval large |  | Average | Nishikawa variety of Avocado is originated in Hawaii. It's a mix of Guatemalan and Mexican avocado type. Average cold hardiness. Ripen in December-January (in Florida), type B. Oval fruit is somewhat resemble Hass variety of avocado, but larger. Has very high oil content. Vigorous and upright growing tree. | **GxM** | Hawaii |
| [no pic](https://toptropicals.com/pics/garden/04/3000/2575.jpg) | **Pollock** | July to August | very vigorous tree | Shy-bearing | Oblong to pear-shaped, very larghe, up to 5 lbs | Green, smooth, glossy | low | Oblong to pear-shaped fruit. very larghe, up to 5 lbs. Green skin, smooth, glossy. Flesh firm, smooth and fin in texture. Deep yellow changing to yellowish-green close to the skin. Contains 3-5% oil. Seed large, frequently loose in cavity. Early season, July to August. Shy-bearing. Fruit too large but of superior quality. originated in Miami on the property of H.S. Pollock. | **W** | Florida |
| [no pic](https://toptropicals.com/pics/garden/04/3000/2574.jpg) | **Poncho** |  |  |  | medium to large | green | very cold hardy | Avocado Poncho. Very cold hardy variety. Produces medium to large green fruit. It survived temperatures around 10F near San Antonio, Texas (Zone 8b). Can take temperatures down to 15F for short period of time without significant damage. | **M** | Texas |
| [no pic](https://toptropicals.com/pics/garden/10/km/PICT4281.jpg) | **Russel** | August-September |  | Light production | pear shaped with long neck, very long fruit | green | low | Russel is easily recognized by its gourd like shape. The fruit and therefore the tree are very popular among the Latin communities of South Florida. Light production discourages commercial growers, but it remains an excellent choice for the enthusiast. Large fruit, 24-36 Oz. Long fruit up to 13 inches. Skin green, smooth, glossy, thin, leathery. Flesh yellow, excellent quality. Seed small, cavity low in the broad end of the fruit, often a solid neck of flesh 5-6 inches long. | **W** | Florida |
| [no pic](https://toptropicals.com/pics/garden/m1/Fruits/Persea_americana22483.jpg) | **Simmonds** | July-September | medium vigor | Regular bearer, but sometimes sheds many fruits | Oblong-oval to pyriform, large | light green, Skin smooth | low | Simmonds avocado is South Florida most popular early season avocado. Fruit large, oblong-oval to pyriform. Skin smooth, light green. Flesh of good flavor, oil content 3-6%. Seed medium size, usually tight. Good production, exceptional trade acceptance, and superb eating quality make it an excellent choice for the home garden or grove. | **W** | Florida |
| [no pic](https://toptropicals.com/pics/garden/09/km/P4081932.jpg) | **Winter Mexican** | December-January | vigorous tree | bears heavily and regularly | Oblong to pyriform | dark green, leathery | very high | Fruit 12-18 Oz., skin thick, leathery, dark green. Seed medium, tight in cavity. Winter Mexican variety is one of most cold hardy varieties. Mature trees may withstand temperatures in the mid 20s. Oblong fruit, 12 to 18 Oz, thick green skin, medium seed. Very vigorous tree, bears heavily and regularly. Originated in Palm Beach, Florida | **GxM** | Palm Beach, Florida |
| [no pic](https://toptropicals.com/pics/garden/10/km/PICT4282.jpg) | **Wurtz (Little Cado)** | May to September | Dwarf, compact and slow growing 10-15 feet | Production is good and it is a consistent bearer Bears moderately but regularly. | pear-shaped, small to medium | green | high | Dwarf hybrid. Fruit 8-12 oz. Skin medium-thick. Quality good, oil content 18%. It is very compact and slow growing, reaching only about 8-12 feet at maturity. Distinctive weeping growth habit. Suited for planters, containers, patios, greenhouse use. Great for dooryard or container growing. The tree can handle temperatures to 25(F) degrees. The seed is small and fruit skin is smooth. Fruits ripen green from May to September. The flavor is very good. Production is good and it is a consistent bearer. Bears moderately but regularly. Originated in Encinitas (California) by Roy Wurtz. | **G** | California |
| [no pic](https://toptropicals.com/pics/garden/m1/raznozw/avocado3126.jpg) | **Yamagata** | very early March-July | vigorous and upright, dark green foliage |  | large, oval-pyriform with a curved neck | green | Medium to low | Yamagata variety is very early. It ripens in Florida in March-April when no other varieties produce fruit. Can ripen over a long season, from March through July. Fruit is large, with a small seed and green skin. Flesh green, smooth, flavor nutty. It's a very fine, gourmet Hawaiian avocado named for agriculture specialist Heiji Yamagata, who develeoped it. According to University of Hawaii consumer poll, Yamagata was selected as one of the best Hawaiian cultivars. Medium to low cold hardiness. Very vigorous and upright growing tree. | **W** | Hawaii |
| [no pic](https://toptropicals.com/pics/garden/10/km/PICT4282.jpg) | **Poncho** |  |  |  | large | green | Very cold hardy | Produces medium to large green fruit. Cold hardy to 15F. Can take temperatures down to 15F for short period of time without significant damage. | M | Texas |

**Very cold hardy avocado varieties**

Cold hardy avocados are of Mexican origin. They are self fertile. They have thin, tender skin that clings to the flesh. The flesh has a high oil content, up to 30%. Some varieties have leaves with pronounced anise-like scent. These avocados are known to be grown around San-Antonio, Texas (Zone 8b). Avocado planted there were damaged, but not killed at 10F. As general rule, these varieties can tolerate temperatures down to 15F for short period of time without significant damages.

**Important things to consider:**

1. Small plants are very tender and susceptible to cold weather. When a freeze is expected, mound mulch around the trunk for additional protection. Cover the tree with a blanket. During severe freezes, add a string of lights or a small heater under the covers. Mature trees are more cold resistant and do not need this extra protection.
2. Cold tolerance depends on many factors. Plant location and wind protection are very important. Plant a tree, so it'll be protected from cold wind, which is much more dangerous than cold itself. Plant avocados in the warmest location in the residential landscape, usually the south or southeast side of the house.
3. Healthy, well taken care of, plants are more cold tolerant.
4. Very important: Humidity plays important role. In general, plants grown in areas with dry, low humidity winter are more cold tolerant, than plant grown in area with wet winter. For example, a plant can withstand 10-15F in dry Texas climate, but may tolerate only 15-20F in wet East Coast climate. Avocado needs very little water during cold. It's very sensitive to over-watering. There is no faster way to kill the plant than too much water during cold spell. The good drainage is the most important factor to consider when planting an avocado tree. In areas with poor drainage, create a mound of soil and plant the tree on the mound.

**Cold hardy varieties:**

*Brazos Belle:* Produces medium-large, purple-black long fruit. Season: October-November.

*Fantastic:* Produces green, paper thin skin, supposedly the most most cold hardy of all. The fruit has a creamy texture.

*Joey:* Selected by Joey Ricers in Uvalde, Texas (just outside of San-Antonio). Produces medium size, egg shaped purple-black fruit. It has excellent flavor. Heavy bearer. Season: September-October.

*Lila*: Produces medium size, green fruit. Season: September-October. Don't confuse this variety with Lula, which is popular Florida variety and commonly used for rootstock. (Lula is cold hardy to 25F)

*Poncho*: Produces medium to large green fruit. Cold hardy to 15F