

# BUCHANAN'S

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## NATIVE PLANTS

### Avocado Tree Care and Harvesting

Avocados are beautiful trees with delicious, nutritious fruit. Once established, they are fairly tough trees. However, many avocados fail during the first 12 months due to poor soil drainage, sunburn or improper irrigation habits. Follow the easy guidelines below for success.

- **Avocados need protection from both frosts and the sun for the first couple of years.**
- When a severe freeze is being forecast, mound additional soil or mulch around the trunk for extra protection, then water thoroughly two or three days before the cold weather is expected. Young trees can be draped **frost cloth** during the freeze event. The corners of the covering should be pulled outward and anchored to the ground. Once the avocados have a couple of year's growth, they will not need this protection.
- Avocados have almost no brown, woody bark like other plants. Notice that the stems and main branches of your tree are bright green. **This green tissue on the stems and bark is very susceptible to sunburn.** Young trees do not have enough leaves to shade this bark and some special care should be given during this first year or two. One option is to paint the green trunk and main branches with a whitewash. This can be easily made by diluting a white latex paint with an equal part of water and painting it on the trunk and branches, but not the leaves.
- Another option is to build a simple structure of metal, wood or PVC to which can be attached a cloth that will keep the mid-day and afternoon sun off the trunk.
- When planting, assure quick establishment and long term health for your avocado tree by using liquid **Root Activator**, **Rhizanova inoculant** and **native hardwood mulch**.
- **Good drainage and proper irrigation are the most critical factors effecting the establishment of your new avocado.** Unless drainage is quick, even the most careful attention to watering will not help. Over-irrigation can induce root rot, which is the most common cause of avocado failure. To test to see if irrigation is necessary, dig a hole a few inches deep and test the soil by squeezing. If it is moist (holds together), do not irrigate; if it crumbles in the hand or is obviously dry, it may be watered. Avocado trees may not need irrigation during the winter rainy season, but watch for prolonged mid-winter dry spells.
- Start fertilizing your tree after one year of growth. Use a balanced fertilizer like **MicroLife Citrus**. Fertilize after blooming when fruit is set and again three months later.

#### Harvesting

- **An avocado tree will produce a few fruit 2 or 3 years after establishment** if it has grown well and has been protected during the winters. With good management, mature trees can produce 2, 3, or more bushels of avocados, depending upon the variety.
- **Avocado fruits do not ripen on the tree** -- they must be harvested and held for several days before they are ready to be consumed. To determine whether the avocados are mature, pick a couple of fruit and set them inside the house out of direct sun. A mature fruit will soften in 3 to 8 days. If the fruit doesn't soften, pick fruit again every week or so until they soften.

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## Avocado Varieties

Name of variety	Ripening Season	Plant size	Fruit Shape / Size	Comments
<b>Brazos Belle</b>	September -October	Large upright tree	medium-large, long purple-black fruit	Shiny, paper-thin skin. The creamy flesh has high oil content and rich, nutty flavor.
<b>Day</b>	July through September	slender tree	Shaped like a club. 8-16 oz.	Day avocado has green, smooth skin.. The fruit is of very good quality and has a nice buttery consistency. <u>Does well in a container.</u>
<b>Don Juan</b>		Tall, spreading, to 25 feet	large	Most cold-hardy of the avocados. Speckled green and brown skin. Exceptional quality flesh.
<b>Fantastic</b>		Vigorous, beautiful tree to 35 feet		“Fantastic” flavor and creamy texture. Its green skin is paper-thin so you can eat this one skin and all. One of the most cold-hardy of all avocados.
<b>Joey</b>	August -September	Erect To 30 feet	6-10 oz. medium size, egg shaped	Selected by Joey Ricers in Uvalde, Texas. Produces purple-black fruit with excellent flavor. Heavy bearer.
<b>Lila</b>	August -September	10-15 feet	10-12 oz. medium size	Produces medium size, bright green fruit. Rich, pleasantly nutty flavor and high oil content.
<b>Mexicola</b>	August to October	Fast-growing to 25 or 30 feet	spherical to pyriform, very small 3-5 Oz	Very small fruit 3-5 Oz. Skin black, thin, and smooth. Excellent flavor. Seed large. Very heat- and cold-resistant. Bears early and very heavily.
<b>Mexicola Grande</b>	August to October	Fast-growing to 25 or 30 feet	spherical to pyriform, small: 4-8 oz.	This variety is similar to Mexicola but much larger fruit. It survived. Bears early and regularly.
<b>Opal</b>	July - September		medium-sized Pear-shaped	Very rich tasting. Green skin.
<b>Poncho</b>	August - September		Medium: 6-8 oz.	Produces medium to large green fruit.
<b>Wilma</b>	September - October		large	Originated in Pearsall, Texas. Very good flavor.