

Wallsend Nurseries

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Avocado Growing

The avocado is basically a subtropical plant but will also grow in temperate areas providing some protection from frost and wind damage is achieved. Unless a frost free site is available choose a frost tolerant variety such as “Bacon” or “Fuerte”. Most of the varieties make a beautiful, broad spreading evergreen or semi-deciduous tree.

Always allow sufficient space for the mature tree. Size and shape depend on the variety chosen but some varieties will grow to as much as 12m high and spread about the same distance. “Wurtz” and “Rincon” are dwarf varieties which grow only 3-4m high by the same width.

Another reason to choose carefully is that most varieties require a pollinator to set fruit in any useful quantity. “Fuerte” and “Hass” are relatively self pollinating.

Avocados need a very well drained soil rich in organic matter. Drainage must be near perfect to avoid danger of root rot which is the greatest killer of avocado trees of all ages.

Although avocado trees can be grown from seed the resulting plants may not duplicate the parent and, in any case, will take many years to bear. For this reason it’s always a sensible decision to pay a little extra for a reliable grafted tree of a known variety suitable for your area.

Avocado trees require regular fertilizing but application during the flowering season should be avoided as this will usually lead to poor fruit set or flower fall. Use a quality citrus fertilizer at the rates recommended by the manufacturer.

Although the avocado is generally considered to be evergreen, heavy leaf fall often occurs when the tree is flowering. This is more pronounced in some varieties such as “Hass” but is not a cause for concern. After flowering is finished the foliage will return.

Fruit which should be clipped (not torn) from the tree will not ripen until harvested and may be “stored” on the tree for some time.

Pests of avocados are common. Watch for fruit fly, banana spotting bug, fruit spotting bug and aphids. All of these will cause some degree of damage to avocado trees.

Fruit fly must be controlled with regular applications of Rogor® at the recommended dosages and intervals. These will also control fruit spotting bug and aphids. Root rot may be controlled only if detected at an early stage. Treat with Antiro® or Fongarid® as soon as possible and ensure drainage is adequate. Anthracnose fungal attack on fruit and foliage can be controlled using Mancozeb®

Recommended varieties for the Newcastle area.

Bacon which fruits in Autumn and is a tall upright tree producing good quality thin skinned, smooth fruits. It is cold tolerant also. Pollinated by Rincon, Hass or Reed.

Fuerte is cold tolerant and produces high quality thin skinned green fruit in mid-Winter. Pollinated by Rincon, Hass or Reed

Hass is one of the most popular. Tall upright tree with thick skinned excellent quality fruit. Creamy texture. Somewhat self pollinating. Can use Bacon, Zutano, Fuerte and Sharwil as pollinators if desired.

Reed produces large egg shaped fruit in Summer. Upright habit. Pollinate with Sharwil, Fuerte and Bacon.

Rincon is a small to medium tree with large seeded fruit. Pollinate with Bacon, Sharwil or Fuerte.

Sharwil bears in Spring with medium sized small seeded fruits. Good for coastal areas.

Zutano has very thin skin. Cold and wind tolerant. Pollinators are Rincon, Hass and Reed.

Wurtz is a small compact tree with quality green fruit. Somewhat self pollinating.