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Avocado - Fact Sheet

Avocados would have to be one of the best fruit to grow in the home garden. To grow them really well they need a few basics

- Well-draining soil – Avos are very prone to root rot so the soil must drain well. Raised garden beds in level gardens are a good idea
- An acidic soil pH – preferably around 5.5 but up to 6.5 is ok – if you are not sure it is worth doing a pH test or taking a soil sample to a local nursery to have one done
- A soil that has been improved – add some compost or manure before planting if the soil is low in organic matter.
- A more or less frost free site. They will tolerate light frosts but if you are in an area of severe frost you will need to find a warm pocket in your garden.
- Enough space. Most avocados grow to be medium to large trees. There are however an increasing number of dwarf types well suited to smaller blocks or to growing in large containers.



Watering and mulching

For good flowering, fruit retention and high quality mature fruit, adequate and regular irrigation is important from flowering all the way to picking according to Mike Wells (Avocados for the SBP, Toowoomba Chronicle, January 2016). What this means in practice is keeping the soil more or less evenly moist from fruit set to picking. Because

we don't tend to get much rain in spring extra deep watering may be required in September to November. Mulching all the way out to the leaves will also help to retain moisture although the mulch layer should not be deeper than about 70mm.

Do you need more than one?

The jury is out on this one. Local growers suggest that very good set is possible in our part of the world with you just one variety. I have had growers tell me that they can achieve up to 30 tonnes per hectare without different varieties. In other words Commercial growers with large numbers of trees get adequate pollination with only variety.

However many nurseries and experts reckon it does help. They argue that because the male and female parts of the flowers are receptive at different times of the day having two trees can help to improve pollination. This of course does rely on you choosing the right varieties!

If you choose a "type a" and a type b" variety from the list below you will get the best results.

Type A	Type B
Hass	Fuerte
Rincon	Sharwil
Wurtz	Edranol
Hazzard	Zutano
Reed	Bacon
Gwen	Shepard

The best tasting varieties in the author's opinion are Fuerte and Hass but both will grow to a largish tree if not pruned. Wurtz is a dwarf variety but the fruit is not as highly rated by Mike Wells (Avocados for the SBP, Toowoomba Chronicle, 2016).



So if you do have space for 2 trees choosing one from each group makes sense to me. This may aid with pollination and also help to spread the produce over a longer period.

Can I grow one from seed?

The answer is almost certainly yes. They germinate easily from seed. The only problem with seed grown avocados is that the fruit might take 7 years to appear and the fruit ranges from great to terrible. You simply do not know the size, taste or shape of the fruit until it appears. I have had contact from some people how have had great fruit from seedling avocados but you do run the risk of poor fruiting types. For the average person you are far better off to purchase a grafted tree to guarantee good fruit. Grafted trees are also far more tolerant of soil conditions.



Avocado from seed are fun to grow but rarely produce top quality fruit.

Should I fertilise my trees?

Fertilise as you would any other fruiting tree. A good application in early spring and mid-autumn with a complete fruit tree fertiliser like Troforte or a fortified chicken pellet fertiliser will work well.

