



## Growing Avocado in a kitchen garden

Avocado is an evergreen tree native to South America. Its fruit is high in protein & highly digestible cholesterol-free oils.



The fruit is a good source of vitamins C, E, K, and B-6, as well as riboflavin, niacin, folate, pantothenic acid, Magnesium and Potassium. It also provides lutein, beta-carotene and omega-3 fatty acids.

### Common Varieties in Kenya

Hass



It is one of the popular varieties grown in Kenya. It is characterized by dark purple colour when ripe and has a good shelf life. Has moderate spreading habit. It matures 8-9 months after flowering, and the recommended spacing is 7 metres by 8 metres.



## Fuerte



It is characterized by thin green and slightly rough skin, even when ripe. Has a wide spreading habit. It matures 6-8 months after flowering and the recommended spacing is 8 metres by 10 metres.

## Puebla



The flesh is green, juicy and of good flavour. It is a rapid grower, erect with drooping branches. It matures 5-7 months after flowering.



### Nabal



The fruit has green/yellowish flesh. The tree is always upright, bears heavily but has a tendency of alternate bearing. Recommended spacing is 8 metres by 8 metres and it matures 8-9 months after flowering.

### Pinkerton



The fruits are long pear shaped with dark/pale green skin colour. The tree has moderate spreading habits, bears heavily & regularly. The recommended spacing is 6 metres by 6 metres.



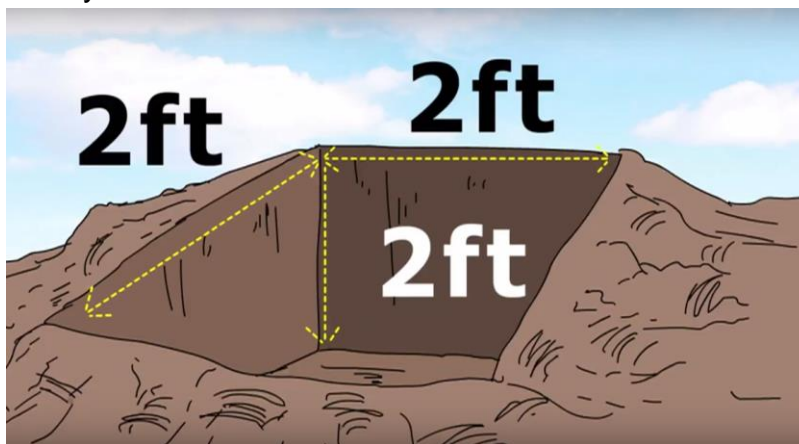
## Planting Material

Avocados can be grown from seeds or from seedlings. Grafting improves the variety by increasing its resistance to diseases, improving yield and increasing its adaptability to different soils.

## Planting

When planting avocado, follow these steps:

- Remove stumps and plough the land up to 30 cm deep
- Dig holes 2ft by 2ft by 2ft. Space holes depending on the variety, soil fertility and climatic conditions.



- Separate the top soil and the subsoil
- Mix topsoil with 2 buckets (20kg) of well rotten manure and 120g of TSP/DAP.
- Fill back the soil with manure-fertilizer mix.
- Remove the polythene, plant the seedling carefully and firm the soil around the hole.
- Water well.



## Field management

- **Mulching:** Apply mulch to reduce moisture loss and controls weed growth
- **Irrigation:** Water is vital in several stages of tree development and the fruiting cycle. Use 5 to 20 litres of water depending on the size of the seedling
- **Fertilization:** Apply 1 wheelbarrow of well decomposed manure twice a year i.e. during the onset of long and short rains. Also, Topdress with 120g of CAN. Lack of minerals will be seen in the leaves.
- **Pruning:** Prune at early stages before flowering and upon completion of harvesting. This will encourage lateral growth and multiple framework branching. Ensure the tree canopy height is always maintained at 70% of its row width. This will allow light to penetrate, improve yield and provides a superior tree structure
- **Thinning:** This involves removing some of the already formed fruits in order reduce competition for nutrients, therefore ensuring high-quality fruits. Too many fruits will result to small sized fruits.
- **Weed:** Weed to reduce competition for nutrients and water.
- **Pests and diseases:**
  - Pests: Common pests include Red Spider Mite, Avocado Thrips, Fruit flies and Whiteflies
  - Diseases: The common diseases attacking avocado are fungal. They include Avocado root rot and Anthracnose.
  - Observe proper management, sanitation and maintenance of the trees to control diseases in your orchard.



## Harvesting avocados

Grafted avocado varieties start to fruit after 3-4 years. The following are some of the indicators of reaching maturity:

- A change in colour from green to black or purple in dark varieties
- The fruit stems turn yellow, the skin may appear less shiny, or the end develops rust-like spots on green varieties
- Some varieties develop a whitish appearance.
- Fruits float on the surface when immersed into water.