



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.



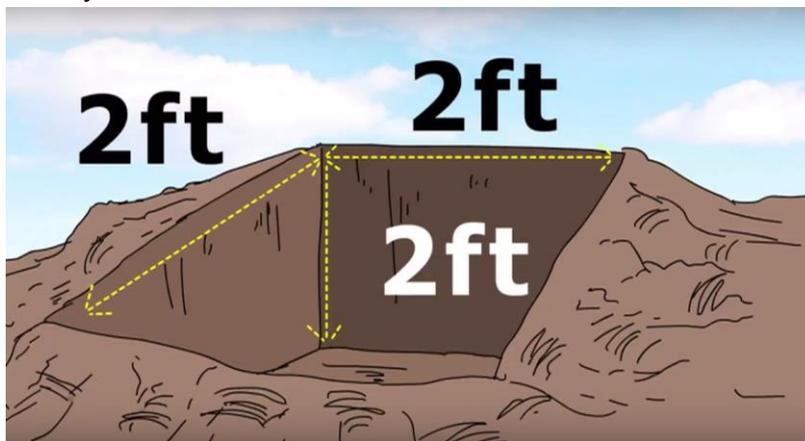
Planting Material

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.