

Grafting

On average, it takes an avocado plant produced from a seed, eight to 20 years to produce avocados. For that reason, commercial avocado varieties (scion varieties) are grafted onto rootstocks (rootstock varieties). The combination will then bear fruit much sooner, often within two years after orchard planting. Grafting also combines the best characteristics of the scion and rootstock varieties. The right combination can improve the tree's resistance/tolerance to diseases and pests, and result in early precocious fruiting.

Pollination

Avocado productivity is influenced by many factors. Perhaps the critical first step is the process of pollination that leads to fertilization and fruit set. Pollination occurs when pollen is deposited on a receptive stigma.

The avocado's flowering behavior is unusual in many ways. The mature tree can produce in excess of a million flowers during the flowering period (which yield 100-300 avocados, meaning only one flower in 10,000 becomes an avocado). The flowers occur in panicles of several dozen to hundreds of flowers. There are two different types of avocado flower heads: determinate and indeterminate. In a determinate flower head, the tip of the shoot that bears the flowers will end in a flower. Indeterminate flower heads terminate with a vegetative bud.



The avocado flower has both functional male and female organs. The male floral organ, which produces pollen, is comprised of the anthers and stamens. The female floral organ is comprised of the stigma (which receives the pollen), style and the ovary.

The avocado exhibits a type of flowering behavior known as "synchronous dichogamy." An individual flower will be open for 2 days; however, the timing of the male and female phases is distinct. When the flower first opens it is in the female phase and the stigma is receptive to pollen. At the end of the female phase, which lasts 2 to 4 hours, the flower closes. On the second day the same flower re-opens in the male phase and sheds its pollen.

The avocado is also unusual in that the timing of the male and female phases differs among varieties. There are two flowering types, referred to as "A" and "B" flower types. "A" varieties open as female on the morning of the first day. The flower closes in late morning or early afternoon. The flower will remain closed until the afternoon of the second day when it opens as male. "B" varieties open as female on the afternoon of the first day, close in late afternoon and re-open in the male phase the following morning.

Since there are hundreds of flowers on an avocado tree at any one time the actual situation in the field encourages movement of pollen between the complementary flower types. The avocado's flowering behavior is believed to promote cross-pollination since the male and female phases of an individual flower occur at different times. It is believed that the inter-planting of complementary flower types can boost fruit set and therefore yield by making pollen available.

Other Interesting Facts

- Avocado orchards help renew our air supply and keep it fresh by absorbing carbon dioxide and producing oxygen
- Two mature avocado trees can provide enough oxygen for a family of four
- Orchard trees lower air temperature by evaporating water in their leaves
- Avocado tree roots stabilize the soil and prevent erosion
- Avocado orchards can reduce storm run-off and the possibility of flooding. By slowing run-off and filtering rainwater, orchards can improve water quality

Harvesting the Fruit

Unlike most fruits, the avocado is one of the very few that does not ripen on the tree. Growers can "store" their mature fruit on the tree for several months, allowing for greater control of the harvest volume. Growers determine harvest-ready fruit by measuring the dry matter of the flesh (remarkably, the sugar level in avocados decreases as they mature). In order to ripen properly off the tree, Fresh California Avocados need to reach the minimum oil content for the proper balance in flavor and consistency.

Avocados are harvested by hand with the help of special shears, sometimes using ladders or mechanical platforms, and picking poles to reach the fruit in tall trees. Pickers place the harvested fruit in large nylon bags which may hold from 30 to 50 pounds of fruit.

The harvested avocados are carefully placed in large picking bins that hold 300 - 900 pounds of fruit each. The fruit is transferred by forklift, tractor or trailer from the grove to a loading area and then hauled to the packing facility. Here the avocados are immediately cooled to remove field heat and preserve quality. The pre-cooled fruit are then ready for packing.

Each bin of avocados is carefully placed on a conveyor belt, which gently tips over the bin, allowing the fruit to roll onto a grading belt, where graders hand check and machines sort the avocados by size. Once sorted, the avocados are rolled into packing tables where they are

gently placed into single layer, double layer or loose-fill cartons. The cartons are sealed, organized by size and stacked onto pallets.

California Avocado Varieties

Fresh California Avocados

What makes Fresh California Avocados so creamy and delicious? Ideal growing conditions. Southern California Avocado groves are blessed with good soil, proper drainage, abundant sunshine and cool ocean breezes - everything an avocado needs to grow up creamy rich and velvety.

Fresh California Avocados let you know when they're ripe

The best way to tell if a California Avocado is ripe and ready for immediate use is to gently squeeze the fruit in the palm of your hand. Ripe, ready-to-eat fruit will be firm but will yield to gentle pressure. Look for fruit that is average to large, oval-shaped and heavy. Then slice into one of nature's perfect foods and enjoy the silky-smooth texture and rich nutty flavor in all your favorite recipes.

Organic California Avocados

Many of the varieties listed below are available as certified organic fruit.

Fresh California Avocado Varieties

Although there are close to 500 varieties of avocados, eight varieties are grown commercially in California, and the Hass variety accounts for approximately 95 percent of the total U.S. crop.

BACON

- A mid-winter green variety
- A green-skinned variety of good quality, the Bacon is a medium-sized fruit available late-fall into spring

Description:

- Oval-shaped fruit
- Medium to large seed
- Easy peeling
- Light taste

Size:

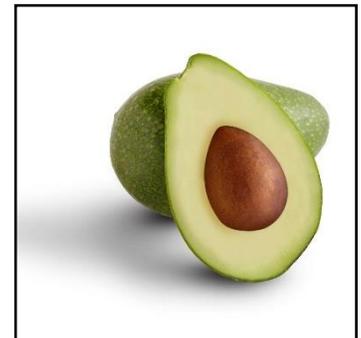
- Medium, ranging from 6 to 12 ounces

Appearance:

- Smooth thin green skin
- Yellow-green flesh

Ripe Characteristics:

- Skin remains green, darkens slightly
- Fruit yields to gentle pressure when ripe

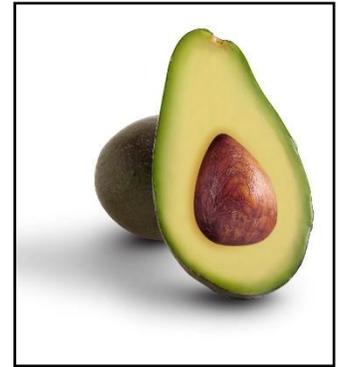


FUERTE

- An established favorite
- Harvested late fall through spring, the Fuerte is the original high-quality California Avocado

Description:

- Pear-shaped
- Medium seed
- Peels easily
- Great taste



Size:

- Medium to large fruit, ranging from 5 to 14 ounces

Appearance:

- Smooth thin green skin
- Creamy, pale green flesh

Ripe Characteristics:

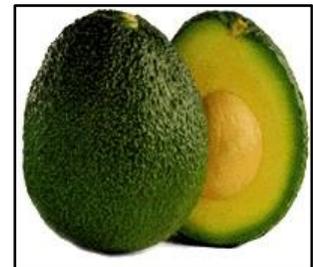
- Skin remains green
- Fruit yields to gentle pressure when ripe

GWEN

- The Hass-like green variety
- Gwen is similar in appearance, taste and texture to Hass, but slightly larger
- Available late spring early summer

Description:

- Plump oval fruit
- Small to medium seed
- Easy peeling
- Great taste



Size:

- Medium to large, ranging from 6 to 15 ounces

Appearance:

- Pebbly, thick but pliable green skin
- Creamy, gold-green flesh

Ripe Characteristics:

- Green skin turns dull
- Fruit yields to gentle pressure when ripe

HASS

- The year-round avocado
- Distinctive for its skin that turns from green to purplish-black when ripe. The Hass is the leading variety of California Avocado and has an excellent shelf life

Description:

- Oval-shaped fruit
- Small to medium seed
- Easy peeling
- Great taste

Size:

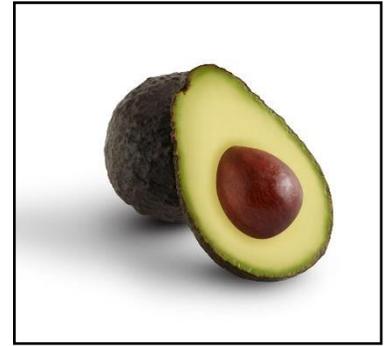
- Full range from average to large, 5 to 12 ounces

Appearance:

- Pebbly, thick but pliable skin
- Pale green flesh with creamy texture

Ripe Characteristics:

- Skin darkens as it ripens
- Fruit yields to gentle pressure when ripe



LAMB HASS

- The California summer sun variety
- Exceptional flavor and a large robust size are the hallmark of this new avocado variety

Description:

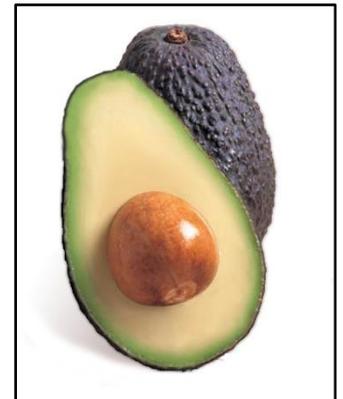
- Smooth, creamy, nutty taste
- Large in size
- Symmetrical, oval in shape; displays exceptionally well

Size:

- Ranges in size from 11.75 oz. to 18.75 oz.
- 32 = 11.75 oz. to 14.00 oz.
- 28 = 13.75 oz. to 15.75 oz.
- 24 = 15.75 oz. to 18.75 oz.

Appearance:

- Looks and ripens like a Hass avocado
- Pebbly skin with pale green flesh
- Medium-size seed



Ripe Characteristics:

- Skin darkens as it ripens
- Yields to gentle pressure when ripe

PINKERTON

- A premium winter variety
- Pinkerton avocados have small seeds, yield more fruit per tree and are available in a full range of sizes early winter through spring

Description:

- Long, pear-shaped fruit
- Small seed
- Excellent peeling characteristics
- Great taste

Size:

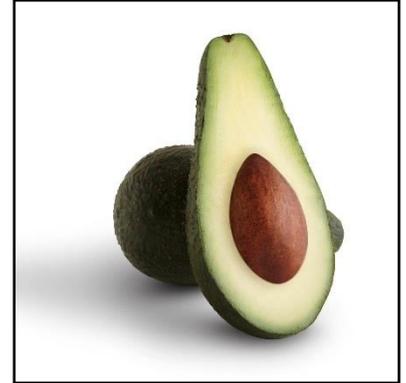
- Large fruit, ranging from 8 to 18 ounces

Appearance:

- Medium thick green skin with slight pebbling
- Creamy, pale green flesh

Ripe Characteristics:

- Green skin deepens in color as it ripens
- Fruit yields to gentle pressure when ripe

**REED**

- The summertime variety
- A large, round fruit available in the summer months and early fall

Description:

- Round fruit
- Medium seed
- Easy peeling
- Good taste

Size:

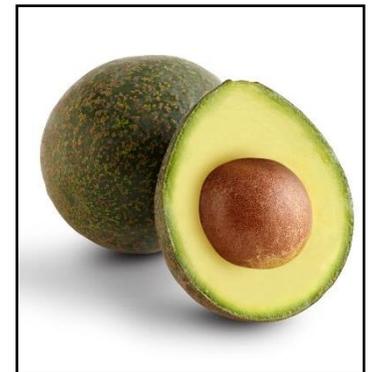
- Medium to large, ranging from 8 to 18 ounces

Appearance:

- Thick green skin with slight pebbling
- Creamy flesh

Ripe Characteristics:

- Skin remains green
- Fruit yields to gentle pressure when ripe



ZUTANO

- A season opener
- Easily recognized by its shiny, yellow-green skin, the Zutano is one of the first varieties harvested when the season begins in September and is available through early winter

Description:

- Pear-shaped fruit
- Moderately easy to peel
- Light taste

Size:

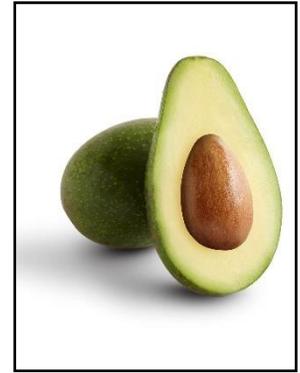
- Average to large fruit, ranging from 6 to 14 ounces

Appearance:

- Shiny, thin yellow-green skin
- Pale green flesh with light texture

Ripe Characteristics:

- Skin retains color when ripe
- Fruit yields to gentle pressure when ripe



Fresh California Avocado Season by Variety

	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
Hass												
Lamb Hass												
GEM												
Reed												
Bacon												
Pinkerton												
Fuerte												
Zutano												
Gwen												