

## How to Make the Avocado Tree Bear

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Taking into consideration the varied soils, water and climatic conditions, the answer is somewhat speculative, and I would like to ask, have you done the necessary things "to make an avocado tree bear"?

In my observations through Southern California after the February freeze, I found there had been practically no smudging done in the avocado groves. The result—trees frozen to the ground, in some cases the work of years wiped out in a single night. Other places trees damaged to the extent that all budwood was injured. Under such conditions can we expect the avocado tree to bear?

In visiting the countries where the avocado is grown from Southern California to the Panama Canal, including Florida and Cuba, I find the annual rainfall is from 50 to 125 inches. How many of us are using the equivalent of even 40 inches and that supplied during the summer months in such a way that the ground is soaked and then allowed to dry out until its next drink in from 20 to 40 days.

In most countries where the avocado thrives, a plow or cultivator is almost unknown, hence there is no deep stirring of the soil and cutting of the fibrous roots. Most of the work is done with the hoe and this for the purpose of keeping down the weeds, which are used as a mulch. It is impossible in this brief survey to do more than indicate the main points to be considered. The avocado tree is a surface feeder and I do not believe it is good practice to plow and cultivate from eight inches to a foot deep and close to the tree, as practiced by most of our growers, but to practice shallow cultivation, subsoiling each *year* once each way in the center of the row in the orchard, keep the soil well mulched with bean straw as far out as the drip of the tree. Grow a leguminous summer crop planted not later than the 15th of March, so as to have sufficient growth to be of some use by the time the hot spell of June is on us. This, you will find, will modify both the temperature of the soil and the air.

Where you are not blessed with a frostless location, I believe if you will do the necessary heating that the tree and budwood can be saved from being damaged by frost. Don't gamble with the weather man with a crop worth thousands in the balance.

Grow a windbreak of either cypress or athol or erect lattice work and the wind situation can be controlled.

Fertilize in the autumn with a commercial fertilizer running high to phosphoric and potash, this will have a tendency to harden and mature the new growth and to make it more able to resist the cold of winter and strengthen and invigorate the tree for the setting of the spring crop, using in addition to your cover crops and commercial fertilizer, plenty of cow or horse manure.

I do not believe one-half of our avocado groves are getting enough water and have to wait too long between drinks. If you have to economize on water, then let it be in late autumn and not then if your trees show any wilt. When I see what has been done by a few growers by producing crops running into the hundreds of dollars worth of fruit on one tree in one year, a crop that will easily pay 10% on the valuation of \$5,000.00 a tree, in a few cases 10% on \$10,000.00 it makes me realize more than ever that the tree is a veritable "tree of gold." It is yours for the working for. It will pay you better than anything else I know of, not only in gold, but in the satisfaction you will receive in being a producer and a blessing to mankind.

Be a weather-watcher—whether it blows—freezes, or burns. The winds, the cold, the heat, you can control all of them. Never mind if your soil is not just right, you can supply whatever is necessary to grow a crop of avocados. It is being done in some cases to such an extent that they have to be thinned out. I do not believe there is any great secret to be solved in the matter. I do not believe that the waving of a magician's wand will transform the tree to bear, but that good hard and unremitting toil along the lines as outlined will make your dreams come true.

I believe there has been placed in your hands as members and growers to cultivate for mankind the greatest fruit known to man, and if you will give due thought to its culture, you will be enriched beyond your dreams.