

Top Tropicals guide to very cold hardy avocado varieties

These avocados are known to be grown around San-Antonio, Texas (Zone 8b). Avocado planted there were damaged, but not killed at 10F. As general rule, these varieties can tolerate temperatures down to 15°F for short period of time without significant damages.

Important things to consider:

- Small plants are very tender and susceptible to cold weather. When a freeze is expected, mound mulch around the trunk for additional protection. Cover the tree with a blanket. During severe freezes, add a string of lights or a small heater under the covers. Mature trees are more cold resistant and do not need this extra protection.
- Cold tolerance depends on many factors. Plant location and wind protection are very important. Plant a tree, so it'll be protected from cold wind, which is much more dangerous than cold itself. Plant avocados in the warmest location in the residential landscape, usually the south or southeast side of the house.
- Healthy, well taken care of, plants are more cold tolerant.
- **Very important:** Humidity plays important role. In general, plant grown in areas with dry, low humidity winter are more cold tolerant, than plant grown in area with wet winter. For example, a plant can withstand 15°F in dry Texas climate, but may tolerate only 15-20°F in wet East Coast climate. Avocado needs very little water during cold. It's very sensitive to over-watering. There is no faster way to kill the plant than too much water during cold spell. The good drainage is the most important factor to consider when planting an avocado tree. In areas with poor drainage, create a mound of soil and plant the tree on the mound.

Cold hardy avocados are of Mexican origin. They are self fertile. They have thin, tender skin that clings to the flesh. The flesh has a high oil content, up to 30%. Some varieties have leaves with pronounced anise-like scent.

Varieties:

Brazos Belle: Produces medium-large, purple-black long fruit. Season: October-November.

Fantastic Avocado: Produces green, paper thin skin, supposedly the most cold hardy of all. The fruit has a creamy texture.

Joey avocado: Selected by Joey Ricers in Uvalde, Texas (just outside of San-Antonio). Produces medium size, egg shaped purple-black fruit. It has excellent flavor. Heavy bearer. Season: September-October.

Lila: Produces medium size, green fruit. Season: September-October. Don't confuse this variety with Lula, which is popular Florida variety and commonly used for rootstock. Lula is cold hardy to 25°F

Poncho: Produces medium to large green fruit. Cold hardy to 15°F

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