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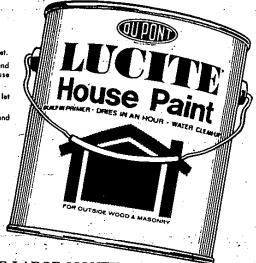
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## Avocado—easy to grow

Avocado seeds (pits) germinate readily. Choose a ripe fruit. To avoid injury to the pit, halve gently.

If the pit has already-begun to germinate, rinse and plant it immediately. If it has not started to germinate, rinse it off, pat dry, and place in a warm, dry area overnight.

After the seed is dry, peel away the parchment-like skin and plant.

Avocado seeds can be started in either water or soil. Soil is recommended because damage may be done during transplanting from water to soil.

To start the seed in soil, begin by placing gravel or pieces of broken pottery in the bottom of a five or six inch pot. Fill with a mixture of two parts garden loam, one part humus, and one part vermiculite.

Plant the seed about two thirds into the soil so that the large, flat end is covered but the tip is exposed. Water thoroughly and coverwith a plastic bag. The seed should germinate in one to three months.

To start the seed in water, suspend it, small end up, over a jar of water so that the large, flat end is just touching the water. Toothpicks may be used to suspend the seed. Push the toothpicks into the sides of the seed just far enough to hold it.

Set it in a bright window and change the water occasionally. When the roots and first leaves develop, plant in sandy loam soil. Keep the soil evenly moist but not wet.

Avocado grows best at moderate, 50 to 60 degrees at night and 70 degrees on a sunny day, or warm, 60-65 degrees at night and 80-85 degrees during daylight, temperatures.

Bright, light or full sun is needed. Place the plant outdoors during the summer months; it likes fresh air. Bring it indoors before the first frost and check carefully for insects.

The avocado plant can be grown naturally or shaped and pruned. Naturally, the plant is tall and leggy with branches developing near the top when the plant is four to five feet tall.

If you wish to shape the plant, remove two inches from the terminal when it is about six inches tall, again when it is two to three feet tall, and with every two feet of growth thereafter.

New branches will grow slower but are usually stronger. Repot every two or three years. You may wish to discard the plant after one or two years and start a new one since trees tend to become leggy and tall.

Do not expect fruit though. Indoor conditions do not favor flowering and fruiting.