AVOCADO PRODUCTION IN UGANDA



NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH ORGANIZATION (NARO)

HORTICULTURE PROGRAMME

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Planting
Should be done at the start of the rain season. Avoid poor drainage areas for risk of root rot. Plant grafted seedlings since they have a shorter gestation. Dig holes 2ft depth and 3ft width then add 0.5 kgs of Single Super Phosphate (SSP) to the topsoil from each hole. Separate top black soil from bottom brown. Mix fertilizer thoroughly with the topsoil and put some soil back into the hole to cover the 1st ft. Plant seedlings in the 2nd ft of the hole in absence of SSP. One tin-full of well-decomposed manure can be used. Remove the plastic container in which the seedling was raised.

Spacing
Space avocado 8 m x 8 m or 7 m x 7 m depending on variety. Plant seedling and firm soil around it. Leave a small depression around the plant for water collection. Remove grafting tape at the point of grafting a month after planting. Keep off water sprouts below the union. Some of the recommended avocado cultivars are: Fuette, Hass, Sharwil Jumbo, Drson 2.

Field Management

Weed Control
Weeds compete with young avocado for light and water. Weed before the weeds flower to prevent production of more seeds. In adult crop ring weed around the plants to get a weed free area for irrigation and application of manure or other fertilizers. The rest of the field can be slashed or herbicide application.

In case a herbicide is to be used. Technical advise must be sought from extension staff. When the crop is still young, intercrop with annual crops e.g beans. After the crop is fully grown, it can be left as a monocrop.

Pruning
Top pruning is advisable to reduce plant height to facilitate easy spraying. Lateral pruning of too low branches and those that are heavily shaded is also advisable. This enables all leaves to get enough sunshine for photosynthesis.

Fertilizer application
Apply manure or artificial fertilizer in a ring around the plant. For increased fruit production, use a fertilizer rich in Potassium (K), use of K results in less flower and fruit abortion and hence high fruit yields.

Soil and water management
Dig trenches between every two rows for water harvesting. Irrigated avocado is able to flower and fruit continuously. One may also plant grass such as citronella on bands to reduce on soil erosion. Mulch around the plants, but avoid mulch touching the plant. This reduces water evaporation without attracting termites to the plant.