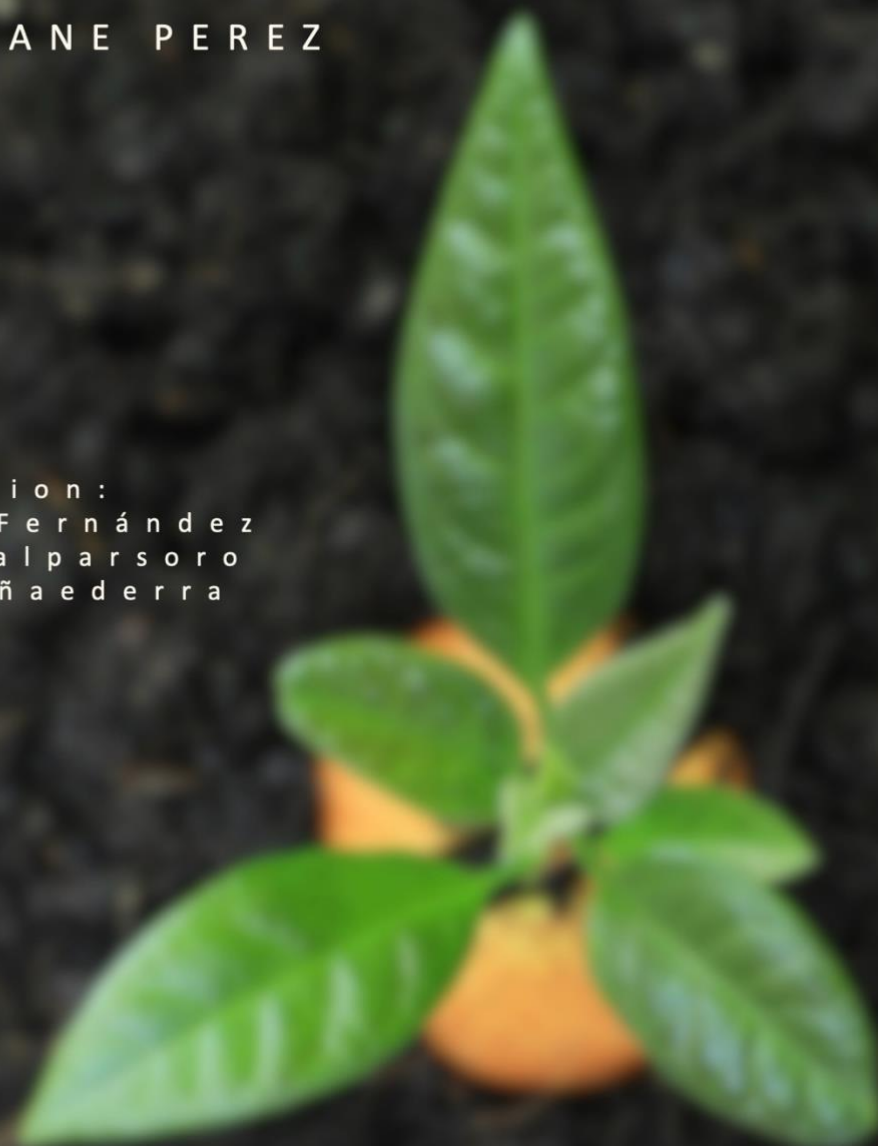


guide for taking care of an avocado

MAITANE PEREZ

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Original title: Ahuakatearen zaintzarako gida

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GUIDE FOR TAKING CARE OF AN AVOCADO

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Take care. That was the last thing she told X. The last message X read. For the time being. Take care of yourself, she told X, taking responsibility away from her, thinking that she will not take care of X, thinking that X might move away, even though she does not know it yet for sure. She has asked X to take care of himself, she nearly begged him (good thing the tone is not noticeable in text messages), as if she were afraid of the fact that one day she will find X lying in a corner, as if she were afraid of the hospital telling her that X is on his last legs. That won't happen. Apparently, it's an irrational fear, yet it exists. The consequence of having so much imagination.

Besides, they would not call her. They would not call her from the hospital or the morgue. That is why she told X to take care of himself. That is the reason, and also to give a meaning to the word that so often comes to her mind. At least a meaning. For that reason and because she doesn't know how to take care of herself either. Because she doesn't know how she will manage the hollow that opened up between her lungs after sending that message. That is why she told X to take care of himself. To take care. And to enjoy himself.

You may also be interested in: [How to germinate an avocado.](#)

avocado

This is the issue: does the avocado want to be sown? In other words, wouldn't the avocado prefer to be free and to grow on its own on a remote land, who knows, in a small field lost among many others, or between volcanoes, or in a field from which the sea can be seen or in a field coming back to life after a fire? The issue is that A does not know for sure whether the avocados can live in those places, but has anyone given them the opportunity, by any chance? Has anyone asked the avocado if it wants to be in a vase in a woman's living room, a woman who listens to the same music every time she cleans the house? Or if it wants to be in a greenhouse in the middle of a straight line full of hundreds of avocados, behind a machine that pours chemical fertilisers on them? No. No one has asked the avocado anything. The issue is that we have decided to take care of the avocado. Just as we take care of fish or orchids. Just as we take care of our mother or partner. Exactly the same. The thing is that we do not know if the avocado wants to be cared for. And maybe we should ask it first, before growing it in our house.

American Persea, commonly called the avocado tree. It can grow to more than 12 metres, but in the vase it will take a much smaller size. Its cultivation requires a lot of patience: it takes many years for an avocado tree in a pot to bear fruit. But it is worth the wait, without any doubt.

soil

After sending the message asking him (almost imploring him) to take care of himself, A turned off her mobile phone. She has had it in her hands for a few minutes, and has been hesitating whether to turn it on or not. But she has not turned it on. She has left it on the table, and she has gone to the shower. She does not know if X will text her back. Probably not, because he is doing something else, and he does not have anything special to answer. A knows that X will appreciate it. She knows X likes feeling she is by his side. And X will

smile when reading that “take care”, even though he will only read it quickly. But he will have nothing to answer. A knows that too. And that’s fine.

X and A are very different from each other. And they will always be, just the way they have been until now. They are different in terms of principles and blood, in everything. And even though A is at ease as she thinks of that, she does not have the ability to accept it, or the will, or the courage.

The hollow that has opened between her lungs after sending the message hurts her, and the shower does not alleviate that pain, even though it distracts her. A examines her chest trying to understand the hollow, she soaps it, she caresses it. Apparently, it is a concern, that is what she thinks; she is worried about X, but she doesn't know why, she doesn't know where that need to worry comes from, even when she doesn't know what to worry about. A realises that she doesn't even know whether her concern is for X or for herself, because what can happen to X, whatever it is, will have an effect on herself, maybe, probably. And that the concern comes because she does not want to argue, and she does not want to live in worry. Because she does not want to live worrying about someone else. That is why she worries.

A comes out of the shower and A decides not to turn on the phone yet. She lies on the bed, naked, in the sheets she has not changed for a long time. Her wet hair remains on her face, with her usual shampoo in her nostrils, and she breathes in deeply, trying to fill the gap in between her lungs. And she thinks that she has not been at home lately, apparently she has lost her roots as if she had been flying from one place to another due to work, and to see X more frequently. And she realises that the calluses on the soles of her feet are smoother now, that her worn out feet are recovering little by little. And she has decided to stay at home, and to walk barefoot, for the first time in ages.

The substratum needs a little bit of acid, with pH between 5 and 7. Peat, [coconut fibres](#), worm humus and a mixture of perlita will also come in handy for this plant.

temperature

N brought up the topic a few weeks ago. They told their friends they had planted an avocado with the kids in the classroom, and that it had been very easy. They had introduced some toothpicks into the avocado stone, and they had left it in a glass of water. And they had seen very well how the roots grew.

It was friends' night, it was hot and they were drinking beer, each of them in their own way. As they frightened the mosquitoes away, N told them that it had been a beautiful experience and that the kids were very happy taking care of the plant for the time being.

A has heard many times about the planting of the avocado, about the fact that people find it entertaining to put toothpicks into the avocado stone they have had for dinner and soak it to see how the roots grow, how the roots develop. And A has heard too that despite managing to grow the plant, it's very difficult for the plant to bear fruit. And she thought that she did not see the point in it, because she always has little time because she always forgets to take care of the plants.

Even though the topic had been changed a long time ago, A had thought about taking care of that plant, specifically wondering whether taking care of that plant is caring for herself because people who take care of it with the fruit in mind take care of the plant for their own benefit, and not for the plant to be happy, if it can ever be happy. And A asked herself if care can be selfish, she asked her friends that, for whom the care is really, and took a sip of her warm beer, killing a mosquito that had just bit her in the arm with her hand.

The avocado cannot resist the cold. You will have to put it indoors in areas with temperatures below 10°C to protect it from the cold of the winter. Likewise, they cannot resist temperatures above 30°C, or the direct sun very strongly either, because that would burn its leaves.

sunlight

A smooths the bed down with her hands, puts her pyjamas on and takes the hake from the refrigerator. She decides to turn on the phone, just in case. She is not in the mood to answer any messages, and only reads through her mother's three messages quickly, and some others from her friends. X has not answered. It's not necessary. He will be alright, just as he wanted. Enjoyment. Paying tribute to that word. To the previous word, however, who knows. Care. It's a word that you say like "goodbye" or "see you later", without further ado, a word that is heard everyday, a formality, not necessarily a true request coming out from the heart, not necessarily a verbal message from the hollow that opens up between the lungs.

She sits in front of the computer, and starts searching in Google, looking for a reliable website. She feels tired, with the cloudy vision she gets when the sun starts to go down at that time, and she goes from one website to another, unable to decide which to pay attention to and which not. Not knowing how to do things makes her nervous and she has been reading information carelessly for more than half an hour. She has seen the image of a cockroach. A photo of a device which releases water droplets on the soil in a vase. A group of caterpillars. Different warnings, advice, responsibilities. And blame. If you have done wrong in the previous step...

The antivirus has opened all of a sudden. Thinking the information she had found is enough, or because she feels without the strength to go on searching more, takes a break from the old screen. Then, she starts cooking the hake as she thinks she would need to eat something fresher given the hot temperatures. She opens the windows so the scent of the evening could enter the house. It's muggy out there, but it won't rain.

She puts the hake in the oven and sits on the sofa to answer her mother's messages.

The avocado needs to be in contact with the sun. If it does not receive enough sunlight, its growth will be harmed and its leaves will not be a bright colour.

Be careful! Get to know how much light your plants really receive with our new app! Download [here](#).

watering/irrigating

It's raining in X's village.

It rains very often in X's village. In A's one, however, there hasn't been a downpour for a long time. That is different too, even though one village is very close to the other. Or close enough. Or far, depending on the day. The humidity is different, one that gets inside the bones, one that in one way or another makes up the bones. A's and X's bodies are made of different humidities. The bones and the blood.

X brings humidity with him every time he visits A, every time he loves A. Dampness spreads when X and A spend the night together, or when they have lunch together, or when they lay on the sofa in the middle of the morning. Then, the humidity really is shared, it gets inside the bones of both of them, in the blood of both of them. In that humidity life starts, wild animals are fed with it, worms reproduce in it, birds drink. For that reason, A has not changed the sheets for the last couple of days, because humidity is good for the lungs, or perhaps not, but because it's good for her, for her dry lungs.

It's raining in X's village, and A knows that the next time he comes, early, very early, the next time X wakes her up, X will gift her the humidity of his village, he will gift her all the wild animals, all the wildness of the forest, all the drops in the sky, he will gift her the protection of fog. X's humid skin will embrace her, colliding with her dry skin. And A smiles when she finds a sock under the living room table, and decides that she will go on holiday soon, for a few days, to a place which will turn her skin humid. They will make their skins the same, amidst laughs, for a moment, just for a little moment.

Surplus water can spoil the roots. That is why the soil must be well drained, and the vase needs holes in it. It is better to lack water than to irrigate the plant too much. But, if the edges of the leaves turn brown, it is a sign that they are drying out. In that case, water the plant more.

Click here: When to [water your plants](#).

transplantation

A decided to grow the avocado, that's the issue. She knows almost for certain that the avocado will die, that's the issue, but she wants to try regardless. Live that experience, even though she does not know whether it will be traumatic or pleasant. She wants to try, to make an effort, and to have another excuse for procrastinating at work, by the way. To take risks. To take responsibilities.

She will measure the pH of the soil, she will make holes to the vase, she will make worm humus, or she will buy it in Amazon, and, if the edges of the leaves turn brown, she will water it more. As it grows, if it manages to grow, she will change the vase so as to give it more space in that small house. She will put the plant in the sunniest corner of the house, even though the house is not very sunny, even though the sunniest corner of the house is quite

dark too. She will give it light, she will find a way to give it light. Maybe, she will also sing to the avocado, even though she has not read that anywhere, maybe she will decide to sing to the avocado, depending on the appearance it takes. Maybe, she will illuminate it with her voice, she has seen that in some film. She will take the responsibility. She will take care of the exotic plant, even though she does not know if she will be able to take care of it, even though she does not know if the plant wants to be taken care of, even though she does not know if she will do it for the plant or for herself. It's easy to overcome the resistance that a plant can offer. And there is no discussion. I will take care of you and there is no debate. Accept it or die.

Transplant the avocado again in spring or in autumn when temperatures are warm. Be careful not to harm the delicate roots during transplantation, to grow the plant successfully.

fertiliser

All the fish that she has had, they have ended up dying, always. It has been a long time since she last had a fish, maybe thirty years or so, as a child, at her parents' house. She remembers a dirty fishbowl, the lichen on the glass, the greasy substance floating in the water, her brother and her trying to put their hands in the water, trying to disturb the fish, probably. She remembers that they had to glue their eyes to the glass so as to see the fish. She remembers her mother's words as well, let's see who will clean the fishbowl. And her father's words too, if they did not clean the fishbowl, he would throw the fish down the toilet. And, although with difficulty, she remembers that her brother and her ended up cleaning the fishbowl, and that they saw the fish clearly after removing that dirt from the glass, and that they fed them, not with small nor big amounts, but maybe too much, because, sooner or later, they always found the fish face up, dead.

She feels sorry for them. And that annoys her. It's not easy for A to feel sorry. She does not know why she has remembered those fish now, and she doesn't know why she needs

to feel sorry for those nameless animals that she had had at home for two or three weeks at the most.

She ends the conversation with her mother, gets up from the sofa, and takes an omeprazole, while she learns to sew the hollow in between her lungs without any external help, just like one of those pills they threw into the fishbowl at their parents' house, to stop the lichens that are growing up her throat.

Give the soil a worm humus layer at the beginning of spring and at the end of summer. We suggest you apply the fertilizer once a month during the first year.

Attention! Learn [How to make worm humus](#) and [How to make homemade organic fertilizer for plants](#).

pruning

The avocado's first root appeared two weeks ago, that's the issue. The issue is that she felt an embarrassment close to happiness when she saw that thin grey root coming down from the avocado stone, growing quickly in the water, spreading throughout the glass, as if it wanted to touch the ground. The roots, or better said, a root, that root, in search of the soil, in that reused glass with no soil. She felt sorry then too. Can roots find a place for themselves in water? She had a strong temptation to change it to another vase filled with water, but she could not, not yet, she needed patience, and to allow the avocado to grow its own way. Its own way, but at her home.

The issue is that it went on to grow roots over the following days, and it grew two more, and the three roots entangled with each other in the water, creating incomprehensible shapes. The issue is that a few days later a small stem appeared as well, on the other side of

the stone, pointing into the air. The plant appeared. The plant was coming. And the thing is that A had had the temptation to cut that stem, a great responsibility was taking hold of her, she had had the will and the wish for cutting the stem. The impulse to get rid of that responsibility. To cut the stem and to forget it.

And she did not do it. That's the issue.

We suggest you do not prune very much or very often. Intense pruning can have a negative effect on the growth of the next year's tree. Attention: never prune the avocado after it rains. That will only weaken the tree.

common pests and diseases

She has been lying in bed for a while, allowing the pill to calm her down, and she stands up slowly the moment the sun has completely disappeared. She has seen a message from X, a photo, a small part of a beautiful place. Green shines in the photo, even if it's quite dark, and it brings the scent of dampened plants with it.

X is always authentic, but in that place he becomes even more authentic. A knows that even though she has never been there with him. X goes back to his childhood, to his wild childhood. There he was completed, that place gave him the humidity in his bones, and it still gives it to him.

Imagining X in his favourite place has made A smile. The message has no words, only a kiss emoji, but it's enough that way. X only tells half of the things he has done in that place. The rest is for him. For him are the wounds, the nicked skin, the pricks, the sounds, the scents and the rain. For him the thoughts, the cigarettes and the hooting of the owls. Behind that silence X keeps his principle, his wage, his joys and his pains. And A does not ask him more. The same places that give X wildness give him calm, and he always comes back with clearer eyes, a little bit older, maybe, revived, strong.

She has been looking at the photo for a long time, as if she wanted to take in the details. When X appeared, places she had never seen in her geography appeared, activities never represented in her imagery, words never used in her dictionary. In front of that world something like fascination grew in her and remained there for a long time. She has learned that being careful can be something different, pain from wounds can be managed differently, the ways through undergrowth are richer, and having danger nearby can be attractive.

Danger, which she kept so far from herself in the past, has become a close creature, it has introduced itself in her daily life, almost invisible, but present. X handles danger like a small dog, always searches for its stimulus and enjoys its company, without taking his hands off it until the last minute when it shows its teeth. But he always takes them off. Danger is relative, always. X knows how to take care of himself, he has always known, and he does not want to give any explanation. That always disturbs A, and it makes her fall in love too. That thing which was so strange to her has become exotic, as attractive as it is frightening.

She remembers the hake all of a sudden, and takes it out of the oven when it was about to get burned. It does not look good, but she will have it for dinner, or will try to, at least. She sends him a kiss emoji back, and sits down at the small dining table in front of a plate. She has not taken out any forks, or serviettes either, or glasses either. She stands still in front of that dark fish, feeling the knots inside her, as though she had forgotten the action of eating. She feels the hollow in between her lungs opening again, a small prick, a

complex sensation in the area under her stomach.

The noise of thunder shakes her, and she stands up quickly, moving close to the window. The storm is coming. It's muggy but it won't rain, an old refrain, her theory upside down.

Standing by the window, gazing at the thick drops that fall down on the street, the burning in her stomach has increased, and her breath has ceased. Life grows and reproduces in moisture, even in internal plagues. She does not understand why, she does not want to be worried. She does not want to take care of X, she does not want to think about the fact of

having to take care of him at some point. Maybe X does not want to be cared for, probably. However, or for that reason, guilt strikes her like thunder. Take care, she tells him, take care, I do not want to take care of you in the future. She tells him that, but she does not tell him. She never says, I am not ready to take care of you, I am not going to stay by your side if you get sick, or maybe I will, but I don't know. And she doesn't understand where that guilt comes from, which hits the ground like a drop of rain. Guilt, because her plants die, because her fishes die, because she just wants to take care of herself, and sometimes not even that.

Leaf beetles, caterpillars, cochineal, red spider, seed glands, and leaf glands. Anthracnosis, rust, pedunculus ring, leaf deformation, rotten fruit, and 'avocado sadness'. The latter affects the roots: the tall branches dry, the leaves lose their green tone and their ability to photosynthesize, the fruits become small, and the tree may eventually die.

Attention! Treat and anticipate the diseases! 'Artificial Intelligence's medical plants will help you diagnose plant problems in a few seconds. Download our new app [here](#).

measures by season

She remembers the avocado all of a sudden. A surplus of water can cause the roots to rot. In the afternoon she takes the avocado to the balcony for the plant to grow in the sunlight, because she noticed it was a little low in the last few days, and she stands there, motionless, under the torrential rain.

She puts it inside quickly and tries to suck up the water on the surface using a cloth. Two leaves have fallen because of the force of the rain. She takes them carefully and throws them in the rubbish. Then, she stood motionless in the middle of the living room with the plot in her hands, realising that she has not read anywhere where the avocado should be placed at night. She leaves it on the little table next to the couch, next to her mobile.

She has a message, another picture of X, it was him, completely soaked. And three laughing emojis. And another emoji that raises its arms saying 'What can we do?' too. She responds to him with another three laughing emojis, while really smiling.

Her feet are cold, but she doesn't want to wear socks. She approaches the kitchen and throws the hake, which hardened, into the rubbish, without regret.

She closes the window that is still open. It no longer rains, but the streets are wet, the city is wet. She breathes deeply, easily, as if the humidity had softened her lungs. She pictures X running in the middle of the storm and she laughs, him completely soaked while she was sheltered at home, dry. Two creatures of different bones and blood. And she realises that her stomach has also softened, and she is hungry, and X chose a way of living a long time ago, and she has arrived late, or later, it's the same, after all. And she cares a lot, but it's the way it is. And she will be opened up, and she will continue saying she cares, from her heart, even if it's worthless, she will continue repeating the inherited word. But she will not go away, for now, until the end.

Is it summer and your plants have died again? Do not forget to take care of them again! Taking care of plants is easier than ever with our intelligent and personalised reminders. Download our new app [here](#).

frequent questions

The issue is that three days before weevils appeared in the avocado. The issue is that the weevils made holes in the leaves; the leaves lost their shining green colour and they held onto the small stem without any strength.

The issue is that a few days after the stem appeared, the leaves had grown, and A had seen them grow proudly. She did not know what she was prouder of, of herself or of the avocado, but she did not mind. The issue is that the weevils appeared immediately, and that A searched for what to do on the internet, and that she bought poison in a hardware store in the

neighbourhood, but she did not dare to use the poison, afraid of making a mistake that would kill the avocado.

The issue is that after the storm, after closing the windows, after throwing the leaves and the fish into the rubbish bin, after smiling and breathing, she takes the flowerpot and puts it on the table, she takes her gloves from the wardrobe under the washbasin, cuts the edge of the poison box with a pair of scissors and starts to work on her new image that seemed as attractive as frightening to her. And the thing is that she enjoyed it. And the thing is that she knew it was not a good idea to plant the avocado in summer, but she had wanted to. And it was muggy. And that she had sent and received messages of love. And the thing is that she had slept in wet sheets that night too, with all the wild animals (of her new life).

What can I do with the avocado if it does not grow any fruit?

What can I do if the humidity is excessive?

[Why do the leaves of my avocado turn yellow?](#)

What can I do if cockroaches attack my avocado?

When do I need to move the avocado from the glass of water to the vase? What can I do if it does not grow as it should?

Now that you know how to take care of an avocado, we encourage you to find out by reading some other guides in HomeEcology! Get to know [_Tricks to face pests](#) and [Energetic properties and recipes of the avocado](#).