

## Ask Cynthia Brian-Avocado Pit

### Reader's Request

Dear Ms. Cynthia:

You helped me root an avocado pit in water by using four toothpicks. Now that it has leaves, what do I do?

Brian, Moraga

Dear Mr. Brian

Wow! From your photo that avocado pit is a happy camper. I'm glad you wrote again because this is a great project for kids to have gardening success. (Editor's note: Brian had emailed long before ASK CYNTHIA BRIAN became a column and Cynthia gave him advice on how to root an avocado seed in water.) Now that the seed has sprouted a stem and leaves and has a thick root system, it's ready to plant. Grab a pot about 10-12 inches in diameter, fill with rich humus. Plant the pit so that half of it is above ground, just like when you used the four toothpicks to anchor the seed halfway in the water. Add redwood bark or mulch to the base to maintain their optimum PH of 6 to 6.5. Water frequently and keep the soil moist, but not soggy. Put in a sunny place, the sunnier the better. When it's about 12 inches tall, cut it back to 6 inches to encourage bushiness. If you have the space, you can transplant to the garden. Keep in mind avocado trees grow to 20-40 feet but you can keep them smaller in containers. It may take several years to bear fruit, if it bears at all. I once grew a 30-foot avocado tree at a former house and had to beat the bark to get it to produce avocados. The crop was so colossal that neighbors nicknamed me Guacamole Mama. With the high price of avocados today, I'd sure like to have that that exotic fruit tree now. Have fun – this is a delicious and rewarding experiment and one to share with other young gardeners as it is easy and low-maintenance.

Cynthia

Postscript: This request from Brian came to me a while ago. Recently he invited me to visit his "guacamole" tree, now living in a half wine barrel and has grown to several feet! (see photo). I definitely recommend trying this with children as a very fun project!

Happy Gardening and happy growing!

Cynthia

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I am available as a speaker, designer, and consultant.

Cynthia will answer one or more questions every other issue as space allows. Email your comments or questions to

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