

The Avocado Guild

Your First Plant Community

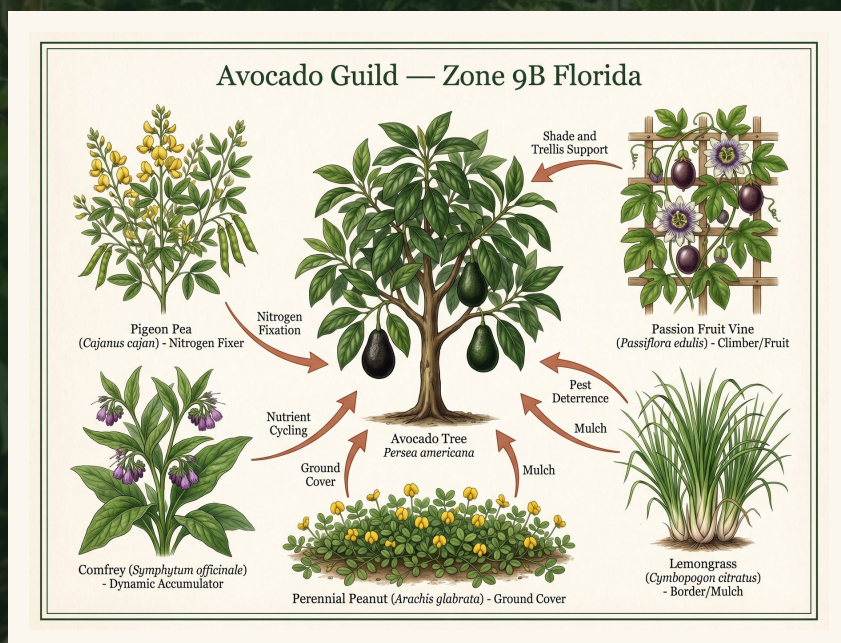
A step-by-step companion planting guide for growing a productive, self-sustaining Avocado-centered food forest in the Florida Panhandle.

5
GUILD PLANTS

300+
DAY SEASON

50–200 lbs
AVOCADO YIELD/YR

2–3 Yrs
GRAFTED FRUIT



WHAT IS A PLANT GUILD?

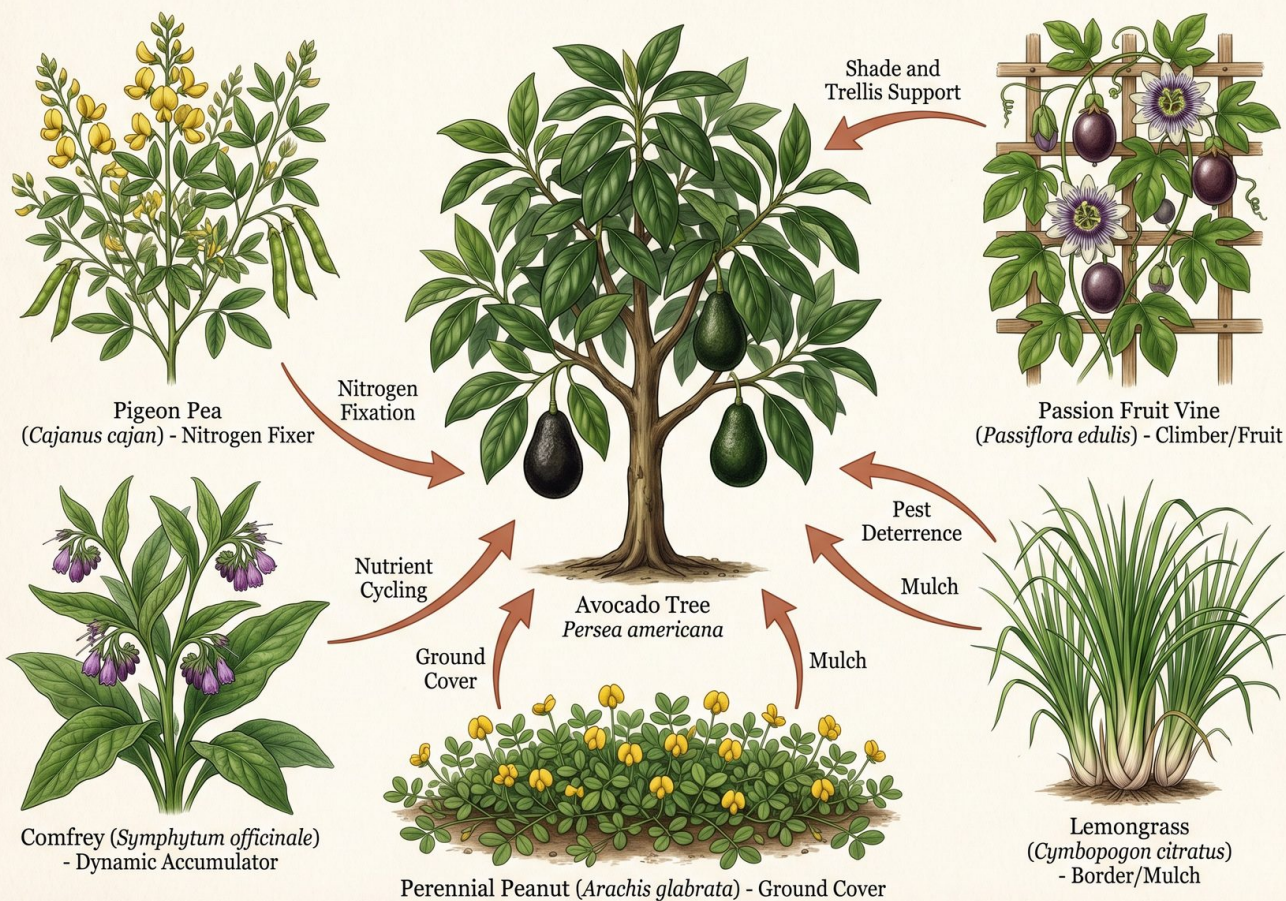
The Avocado Guild — Explained

Understanding the Guild Concept

A plant guild is a group of plants that work together to support a central productive species — in this case, your Avocado tree (*Persea americana*). Each guild member plays a specific role: fixing nitrogen, accumulating nutrients, suppressing weeds, attracting pollinators, or deterring pests. Together they create a self-sustaining micro-ecosystem that reduces your labor and inputs while increasing yields.

The Avocado Guild below is designed for Zone 9B Florida Panhandle conditions — sandy soils, humid summers, and occasional frost events down to 20°F. All five companion plants are cold-hardy, low-maintenance, and available at our nursery.

Avocado Guild — Zone 9B Florida



Avocado Guild — Zone 9B Florida • FL Panhandle Edibles

GUILD MEMBER PROFILES

Meet Your Five Companion Plants

Avocado Tree **CENTER PLANT – THE ANCHOR***Persea americana* – Fantastic / Winter Mexican varieties

CANOPY

BUY GRAFTED

COLD-HARDY TO 20°F

The centerpiece of your guild. Fantastic and Winter Mexican are the two best avocado varieties for Zone 9B – both tolerate brief dips to 20°F and produce abundantly in the Florida Panhandle climate. Grafted trees from FL Panhandle Edibles fruit in 2–3 years versus 7–9 years for seedling trees. Plant on the south or southeast side of your property for maximum sun and frost protection from north winds.

→ Yield: 50–200 lbs/year at maturity (grafted trees)

Pigeon Pea

Cajanus cajan

NITROGEN FIXER

DYNAMIC ACCUMULATOR

Fixes atmospheric nitrogen directly into the soil, feeding your Avocado tree naturally. Chop-and-drop the stems as mulch to release nutrients. Fast-growing and drought-tolerant once established. Self-seeds freely – treat it as a living fertilizer factory. Cut back hard each spring to keep it from shading the avocado.

Comfrey

Symphytum officinale

DYNAMIC ACCUMULATOR

NUTRIENT CYCLING

Deep tap roots mine calcium, potassium, and phosphorus from subsoil layers that shallow-rooted plants can't reach. Chop the leaves and lay them around the avocado drip line as a mineral-rich mulch. Flowers attract beneficial insects. Virtually indestructible – cut it to the ground and it regrows within weeks.

Perennial Peanut

Arachis glabrata

GROUND COVER

LIVING MULCH

N-FIXER

The ideal living mulch for Zone 9B. Suppresses weeds, fixes nitrogen, retains soil moisture, and produces cheerful yellow flowers. Stays low (6–8 inches) and never needs mowing. Thrives in the heat and humidity that challenge other ground covers. Plant densely under and around the avocado drip line.

Lemongrass

Cymbopogon citratus

PEST DETERRENCE

BORDER PLANT

MULCH

Forms a dense, aromatic border that deters deer and many insect pests. The citrus scent confuses and repels aphids and whiteflies that target avocado. Clumps can be divided and replanted or used in cooking. Harvest outer stalks regularly and use them as mulch around the avocado base to retain moisture and suppress weeds.

Passion Fruit Vine

Passiflora edulis

TRELLIS CLIMBER

SHADE & SUPPORT

FRUIT

Train it up a trellis on the north side of the avocado to create a productive vertical layer without competing for canopy space. Stunning purple flowers attract pollinators that also visit the avocado blossoms. Fruits prolifically in Zone 9B – 50–100 fruits per vine per year. Prune hard after each fruiting flush.

STEP-BY-STEP INSTALLATION

How to Plant Your Avocado Guild

Step	Action	Timing	Notes
1	Prepare the planting bed	Week 1	Mow or smother existing grass in a 10-ft circle. Layer 4–6 inches of wood chip mulch.
2	Plant your grafted Avocado	Week 1	Center of the guild. Dig a wide, shallow hole. Do not amend the soil — avocados prefer native soil.
3	Plant Perennial Peanut	Week 1–2	Fill the entire 10-ft circle under and around the avocado. Plant plugs 6 inches apart.
4	Plant Pigeon Pea (3 plants)	Week 2	Place on the north and east sides, 4 ft from the trunk. Will reach 6–10 ft tall.
5	Plant Comfrey (2–3 plants)	Week 2	Place at the drip line on the south and west sides. Keep 3 ft from the trunk.
6	Plant Lemongrass (3–4 clumps)	Week 3	Form a border ring at the outer edge of the guild, 8–10 ft from the trunk.
7	Install trellis + Passion Fruit	Week 3–4	Erect a 6-ft trellis on the north side. Plant 1–2 passion fruit vines at its base.
8	Mulch, water, and observe	Ongoing	Water deeply 2x/week for the first month. Chop-and-drop Pigeon Pea and Comfrey quarterly.

Seasonal Maintenance at a Glance

Spring (Feb–Apr): Cut Pigeon Pea to 12 inches. Chop Comfrey leaves and lay as mulch. Top up the wood chip mulch. Watch for avocado bloom — reduce irrigation slightly to encourage flowering.

Summer (May–Aug): Deep water 2x/week during dry spells. Harvest Passion Fruit as it ripens. Divide and expand the Lemongrass border. Chop-and-drop Comfrey monthly.

Fall (Sep–Nov): Reduce irrigation as temps cool. Apply a final compost layer. Protect young avocados with frost cloth if temps below 28°F are forecast.

Winter (Dec–Jan): Pigeon Pea may die back — leave the roots in place as a nitrogen source. Perennial Peanut slows but stays green. Avocado is dormant — do not fertilize.

Ready to Plant Your Avocado Guild?

All five guild plants — plus grafted Fantastic and Winter Mexican Avocado trees — are available at our nursery. Visit us in person or browse online; we can help you pick the right sizes and quantities for your space.

Visit FL Panhandle Edibles • Growing Good

5198 County Road 30A, Port St. Joe, FL 32456 • Open Saturday 9–5; Wednesday–Friday by appointment

Pickup at the nursery or local delivery in ZIP 32456 (\$50). We don't ship plants.

850-227-8177 • flpanhandleedibles.com

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