

Citrus

DID YOU KNOW
THAT THE MOST COLD-
HARDY CITRUS TREE IS
THE ARCTIC FROST
SATSUMA?

GROWING CITRUS

There's nothing quite like picking fresh lemons, limes, or oranges from your own tree. The good news is that citrus trees are relatively easy to grow when their basic needs are met: sunshine, well-drained soil, consistent watering, and regular feeding.

PLANTING

Citrus trees thrive in full sun and need at least 6–8 hours of direct sunlight each day. If you live in Zones 9–12, citrus can be planted in the ground. All other zones will require citrus to be planted in a greenhouse or a container.

One of the biggest advantages of container-grown citrus is mobility. When temperatures are expected to fall below the variety's cold tolerance, the tree can be moved to a protected area such as a garage, greenhouse, sunroom, or covered porch.

For container-grown citrus, select a 10 to 20 gallon pot with drainage holes and use a high-quality, well-draining potting mix. Never use garden soil in containers.



WATERING

Proper watering is the key to a healthy citrus tree. Newly planted trees should be watered deeply a few times per week. As the tree becomes established, reduce watering frequency but continue watering deeply.

Established citrus trees prefer deep, infrequent watering rather than light daily watering. Allow the top three inches of soil to begin drying before watering again. Overwatering can cause yellow leaves, root problems, and leaf drop. Signs of underwatering include curled leaves, fruit drop, and dry soil. When in doubt, check the soil moisture before watering.

MAINTENANCE

Feed

Citrus trees are heavy feeders and benefit from regular fertilization during the growing season. Use a fertilizer formulated specifically for citrus. Apply typically in early spring, late spring, and mid-summer. Yellowing leaves often indicate a nutrient deficiency and can usually be corrected with a quality citrus fertilizer.

Prune

Citrus trees require very little pruning. Remove dead, damaged, or crossing branches as needed and prune away suckers growing from below the graft. Light pruning can be done after winter harvest before new growth begins. Avoid excessive pruning, as citrus naturally develops an attractive shape and fruit-producing canopy.

Repot

As the tree grows, roots may become crowded. Repot when roots begin circling inside the pot, moving up to a container just one size larger.

COMMON PESTS

Occasionally, citrus trees may attract pests such as aphids, scale, spider mites, or citrus leafminers. Regularly inspect new growth and the undersides of leaves. Healthy trees can tolerate minor pest activity, but severe infestations may require treatment with horticultural oil or insecticidal soap.

HARVESTING

One of the advantages of citrus is that fruit can remain on the tree for an extended period after ripening. Citrus does not continue ripening after harvest and color alone does not always indicate ripeness. Taste-testing is often the best way to determine when fruit is ready. Winter is the peak season for most citrus harvests.

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