



Gardeners Helping Gardeners Succeed

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All About Citrus

Next time you bite into a juicy sweet orange, tangy grapefruit, or tart-sweet lime, thank a Franciscan. Citrus, along with grapes and olives, caravanned to North America with Spanish missionaries in the 18th Century, as they made their pilgrimage from Baja Mexico to Sonoma, California.

What does citrus offer gardeners? Shiny green leaves, graceful trunks and branches, and fragrant white spring flowers that develop into an amazing array of fruits. While all citrus bloom in spring, fruits ripen at different times of year.

Soil & Watering

In chilly winter regions, follow European aristocrats by planting citrus (especially dwarf varieties) in large pots on wheels. During warm months, place outside in full sun. Well-draining soil is extremely important for success. We recommend *Gardener's Gold Potting Soil* for all outdoor container plantings.

When the weather cools, roll citrus into the house near an interior window that provides at least eight hours of direct light per day. Water sparingly in winter—the tree's metabolism slows and it doesn't need much water other than to keep the roots moist. Come spring, roll citrus back outside, water, and start feeding.

Fertilizing

Use packaged citrus food that contains nitrogen, phosphorous, and potassium, plus iron and zinc, crucial to citrus fruit production. We recommend *Master Nursery Citrus Food* or *Dr Earth Fruit Tree Fertilizer*. Leaf yellowing indicates either overwatering or a shortage of trace elements, especially for trees in containers. If you are watering correctly, apply a chelated iron product containing trace elements, following label directions.

Pruning/Thinning

Prune anytime to shape the tree, remove dead wood, or thin the branches. Remove any suckers arising from below the trunk's graft union. Varieties that bear heavily in alternating years sometimes need to be thinned during the heavy years. For those varieties, after any fruit has dropped naturally, thin developing fruits to clusters of two to three.

Harvesting

Flavor, not color, is the only reliable indicator of ripeness. Pick one fruit and taste it—if it's not ready, wait. Use pruning shears to nip the fruit with a bit of stem. Don't pick by hand or you'll risk breaking a branch.

Insects & Disease

Citrus are susceptible to whiteflies, scale, and sooty mold. Treat with *Safer Insect Killing Soap*.

Due to the uncertainty of wholesale grower stock, trucking, and weather, all varieties will not be available at all times. Although we do have the ability to special order some stock, we make no guarantee of its arrival and cheerfully encourage alternate selections.

Eureka Lemon This is the standard lemon of markets. Its fruit is yellow, juicy, and highly acidic, with very few seeds. Its branches have a few thorns, and its foliage is dark green; new foliage is bronzy. It grows to 20 feet tall, with a slightly open canopy. **Pink Variegated** is an excellent patio or container plant with creamy-white-and-green variegated leaves, pinkish tinge to new growth. Produces abundance of juicy, market-quality lemons year-round. Moderately growing to 12 to 15 feet.

Improved Meyer Lemon Not a true lemon, citrus meyeri is thought to be a hybrid of a lemon and a sweet orange. 'Improved Meyer' is the virus-free variety that replaced the original. The yellow-orange flesh is very juicy and slightly sweeter than a true lemon, yet still moderately acidic. Much less sensitive to cold than other lemons, 'Improved Meyer' tolerates temperatures down to about 22° (compared with about 28° for other citrus). It's nearly thornless and often ever-blooming, particularly in mild climates. Its adaptability as a container plant allows it to be grown indoors even in the coldest parts of the West. Moderately growing to 8 to 10 feet; smaller in containers.

Lisbon Lemon This vigorous, thorny tree grows upright to 25 feet, with a denser canopy than 'Eureka'. Fruit can be harvested year-round in most areas. 'Lisbon' is more resistant to cold than 'Eureka', and it's better adapted to hot climates. Dwarf variety is moderately growing to 8 to 12 feet.

Bearss Seedless Lime (dwarf) Heavy bearer of juicy, lemon-sized fruit in winter to early spring. Grows into a rounded, densely branched, dwarf form. Excellent container plant. Moderately growing to 6 to 8 feet.

Mexican Thornless Lime This improved variety has thornless, upright branches. Large fruits ripen in fall. Moderately growing to 15 feet.

Nagami Kumquat Dense branches with bright orange, delicate tasting oval fruit, nearly year round. Very ornamental in containers. Slower growing, upright to 8 by 6 feet.

Campbell Valencia Orange Excellent juice orange. Fruit can remain on the tree until late summer and remain sweet. Large tree to 25 feet. Dwarf variety is moderately growing to 8 to 12 feet.

Washington Navel Orange Delicious, easily peeled, seedless fruit is produced. Moderately growing to 15 feet. Dwarf variety to 6 to 8 feet.

Moro Blood Orange Unique red fleshed orange that produces delightful flavored juice with a hint of raspberry. Highly ornamental tree with red blushed fruit in clusters near the outside of tree. Moderately growing to 12 to 15 feet

Dwarf Redblush Grapefruit Improved dwarf variety with fewer seeds and richer blush-red color to flesh and rind. Fruit lasts well on the tree, ripening in winter through spring. Moderately growing to 8 to 12 feet.