

GROWING CITRUS

Yes You CAN Grow Lemons, Limes and Other Citrus Plants in the Pacific Northwest!



GROWING CITRUS PLANTS IN CONTAINERS

Our climate is too cold and wet in winter for citrus plants to survive in the ground. The simple solution is to grow them in pots. Move them outdoors in spring after frosts are no longer a threat, and back indoors in autumn before the frost returns.

To transition plants between outside and inside, place them outdoors during the day and indoors at night for a week before moving the plant to its seasonal location.

Plants grown in containers grow slower because of limited root space, and will stay smaller than if they could be planted in the ground. Some are grafted to dwarfing root stocks to help plants bear fruit at a younger age.

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INDOORS

Move plants indoors around the average first frost date. In Portland that is October 18th, but it does vary and can be much later. Check forecasts for freezing temperatures to be sure your plant is not nipped by cold.

Before moving the plant inside, check leaves and branches for any signs of insect activity. To prevent spread deal with any insects before bringing plants in. Some leaf loss is normal when plants move indoors.

WHILE INDOORS CITRUS NEED:

- A bright south facing window or grow light.
- Water once a week unless your house is very cool, then water less frequently. Allow the soil surface to dry between waterings. Wet the root ball thoroughly and allow water to drain completely before placing in a saucer.
- Signs of over-watering are flower bud drop, fruit drop, and loss of leaves.
- Do not fertilize during winter months.
- Hand pollination if flowering occurs while inside.

OUTSIDE

Move plants outside around the average last frost date. In Portland that is April 26th; but this is an average, so pay attention to forecasts for dipping temperatures.

WHILE OUTSIDE CITRUS NEED:

- Full sun, at least 8 hours a day.
- Moist soil, never too soggy or too dry. Allow the soil surface to dry between waterings. In hot temperatures, water more often. Wet the root ball completely, allowing the water to drain. Never allow the roots to sit in water.
- Citrus fertilizer during spring and summer. We recommend EB Stone Citrus & Fruit Tree food. Iron deficiency can be an issue – signs are yellow spots on leaves. Treat with an iron supplement.

POLLINATION

Citrus are self-fertile, so just one plant is required for pollination. You may get more fruit if you hand pollinate: use a small, soft paint brush and move pollen from flower to flower. Dropping fruit can be a sign of poor pollination.

CITRUS VARIETIES



All Citrus have deliciously fragrant white flowers. Portland Nursery carries a wide variety of citrus, and these are the most popular:

Meyer Lemon – Meyer Lemon is a hybrid of lemon and sour orange. Fruit is round, skin is tinged orange, thin, and edible, and flavor is sweeter and less acidic than typical lemons. They bloom and bear more prolifically than most lemons as well.

Thai Lime – Thai Lime leaves and fruit are used in Thai and Cambodian cooking. Hourglass shaped leaves are aromatic and flavorful. Fruits are small, bumpy and green. Flowers can occur year-round, but are most prolific in spring.

Bear's Seedless Lime – Large, seedless limes that are great for cooking turn yellow when fully ripe.

Nagami Kumquat – Small orange fruits with thin, sweet rinds that are eaten whole.

Cara Cara Naval Orange – Orange skin with delicious, extra sweet red flesh.

Yuzu Ichandrin – Commonly used in Japanese and Chinese cuisine, Yuzu looks like a bumpy lemon or lime. Rinds are very aromatic and flavorful and usually used when green. Flesh is yellow and fruits are very seedy. Yuzu is the only edible citrus that may survive outdoors in Portland; it's hardy to 0 degrees, but to be successfully grown in the ground will need exceptional soil drainage. Branches are extremely thorny.

PESTS

Citrus plants are prone to aphids, spider mites and scale.

- **Aphids** can be controlled by rinsing them off with a strong stream of water or applying insecticidal soap.
- **Spider mites** can be controlled by applying Mite X. The active ingredients are cottonseed & clove oils.
- **Scale** is more difficult to deal with. They can be eliminated by wiping the top and bottom of every leaf with rubbing alcohol, focusing on the area where the leaf meets the stem. Summer oil is an insecticide that will suffocate insects and may prevent future infestations. Water thoroughly before spraying and **do not spray** when temperatures are above 75-80 degrees, or 24 hours before a freeze.



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