



GROWING CITRUS

Growing citrus in the Lowcountry can be a rewarding experience. There are several varieties that do well here, and depending on where you live, some can actually be grown in the ground versus containers.

Types of citrus

Meyers Improved Lemons- A sweet treat! Tangy and slightly sweeter than your average lemon. The Meyer Lemon is also more disease resistant than many other lemon varieties. Fragrant flowers most often bloom in the spring but can also bloom in the fall. Great plant for containers and tolerant of our winter temperatures!

Nagami Kumquats- Tart and refreshing! Ornamental and culinary uses make this citrus a favorite addition into a garden. Fruit is eaten with the rind intact. Usually sets fruit twice a year.

Satsuma Mandarin- Juicy and delectable, these smaller sized tangerines are full of juicy sweet flavor, especially after they have been exposed to some cooler temperatures. Fragrant flowers in the spring produce abundant fruit in the fall. Satsumas are one of the more cold hardy citrus making them a good choice for Lowcountry gardens. They also grow well in containers!

Bearss Seedless Limes- This disease-resistant plant produces large quantities of seedless fruit. The limes add flavor to your favorite cocktails or culinary creations! Be sure to protect these plants when temperatures dip into the 30's.

Watering

When watering citrus we recommend erring more on the dry side. If a citrus plant stays too wet both the plant's health and fruit production can be adversely affected. In a container we recommend watering when the top 3'-4' of soil is dry. When in the ground, watering once a week is usually sufficient.

Fertilizing

Fertilization is extremely important to your citrus! We recommend Espoma Citrus Tone because it is formulated especially for fruit and nut trees. It is a safe and completely organic fertilizer which makes it easy for the plants to use. Too much or too little fertilizer can both adversely affect your plant. Excess nitrogen will force the plant to drop its blooms or fruit. The plant will focus on new leaf growth instead of fruit production. Citrus should be fertilized at the following times: March/April (pre-bloom), May (post bloom)

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and September/October (overall health). Fertilizer is greatly appreciated, by the plant, when flowers begin to appear!

Harvesting

In the Lowcountry, most citrus will set fruit in the spring and ripen by late fall. Lemons will resemble limes up until the time they are ready for harvesting

Winter Protection

Citrus need protection during our cool Lowcountry winters. Temperatures 40 degrees and below can injure foliage and flowers. If citrus is in a container your plant can be protected by placing the container close to your house and under cover of a porch roof. Frost cloth is another way to insulate the plant and protect it from frost. Christmas lights (not LEDs but those that which generate heat) strung throughout the plant or empty milk jugs filled with warm water and placed at the base of the plant can provide extra protection for you plants during cold days and nights.



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