

CITRUS

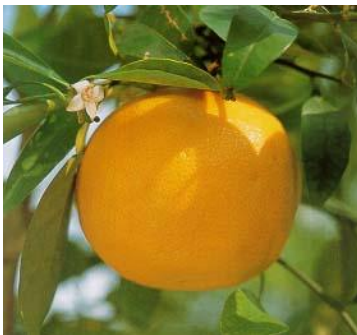
HUMBER NURSERIES 'GREEN THUMB GUIDE'



Tropical fruit trees can be grown outdoors during the summer months but must be kept indoors through the winter. They do best in large deep containers with a soil mix which allows excellent drainage.

Their taste and delightful floral fragrances or 'neroli', call to mind faraway places. Aside from their striking beauty, the interest in citrus as houseplants is in their wonderful fruits! If it tastes good from your local grocer, it will taste even better when home grown. Experience for yourself the zesty flavours of these vitamin rich fruits and enliven a sunny room!

For most who have traveled to the sunny south, where the temperature never dips below 20°F (-6°), large evergreen shrub or tree forms of citrus (from 2 – 20' tall) come to mind. When you visit your supermarkets and see the assorted colours and sizes of citrus and other tropical fruits, you can't help but wonder: "How can I grow my own?"



GRAPEFRUIT – Marsh



KUMQUAT – Nagami



LEMON - Eureka

CULTURAL NEEDS

The harvest season in the south is usually from October – April and in some regions, even all year round. You can enjoy citrus fruits if you supply the following conditions:

ACCLIMATIZE YOUR NEW CITRUS PLANT TO PREVENT UNDUE STRESS, TRY TO MAKE SMOOTH TRANSITIONS, ESPECIALLY WHEN MOVING YOUR PLANTS FROM INSIDE TO OUTSIDE AND BACK.

TEMPERATURE & HUMIDITY

Temperature affects the developing fruit...the hotter the temperature the quicker the fruit development.

The rind colour is a factor of humidity and temperature. The pigment of orange is anthocyanin and it is dependent on warm climates, not overly hot or humid ones. The pigment of grapefruit, lycoprene is dependent upon a hot climate.

The best way to increase humidity around citrus plants is to set the pot on a tray with pebbles and keep water just below the top level of gravel. Another method is to mist the plants 2 – 3 times a week.

SOIL

pH 5.5 – 7.5; plant starvation will occur above or below this range
Use PROMIX or a well draining soil
Mix your own soil using composted/shredded fir or pine bark or perlite

LIGHT

If windows are not a possible location for your new citrus, supply bright, artificial light from 8 am to 6 pm. Beware of hot sun causing sunburn.

WATER

Citrus requires regular deep waterings
Water especially when the top 5 cm. of soil is dry
Avoid keeping the area around the trunk wet
Never allow plant roots to sit in water

FERTILIZER

Citrus are heavy feeders and require high nitrogen fertilizer, such as 30-10-10. During fruiting, they benefit from fruit and vegetable fertilizer. Regular foliar sprays of iron chelate and other micronutrients are beneficial

A healthy plant is the first step to pest-prevention

POLLINATION

Most citrus are self-fertile but hand-pollination with a small paint brush improves fruit production

PRUNING

Little pruning is required for most citrus
Lemons produce abundant upright suckers which must be removed
Remove suckers, dead twigs and extra long growth
Prune only to shape the plant and keep it relatively compact for the space available

Clip off any fruit as it ripens, do not pull
A freshly pruned plant is susceptible to sunburn, avoid placing in full sun
Refer to **Green Thumb Guide GT 121 Pruning**



Here are a few of the interesting hardy citrus to try in your home.

Grow Your Own Sunshine!

ORANGES

Can be found growing either in hot humid or intermediate climates. These different climates are responsible for different varieties which will develop specific rind colours when ripening. Most popular are the sweet Navel oranges – ‘Washington’ is the most popular variety and can grow 5 m. tall! ‘Valencia’ oranges are the common type of orange that grows under any warm conditions and are quite successful indoors. ‘Calamondin’ orange is the most beautiful with its lush glossy, dark green evergreen foliage on a compact shrub with profuse, fragrant blossoms most of the year. The wonderful display of flowers sport tiny green and orange coloured fruit with a sour flavour (suited to marmalades).

Citrus x paradisi – white flesh: ‘Marsh Seedless’, pink flesh: ‘Ruby’ or ‘Star Ruby’ originated in West Indies but enjoy hot and not too humid conditions.

GRAPEFRUIT

Citrus limon

Most vigorous citrus plant (can grow up to 3 m. tall)

New growth is light pink, maturing to light green, glossy evergreen foliage

Prefer cool temperature and are very easy to care for

Cut back plants regularly to keep them compact

‘Meyer’ is a compact variety that blooms for a very long period

‘Improved Meyer’ is an ‘everblooming’ variety and produces virus-free lemons

‘Eureka’ is a good producer but relatively short-lived

Lemons bear abundantly – often more lemons than you’ll need at a time

Harvest them whenever they are an acceptable size

Simply squeeze the juice into ice cube trays and freeze for later use!

LEMONS

Citrus aurantiifolia

Small thorny trees or shrubs with dark green evergreen leaves

Some plants originated in Mexico (small fruits) others from Persia (large fruits)

Harvest fruit when it’s acceptable in size (green) – but fully mature fruits are yellow!

Limes prefer hot and humid conditions

Popular variety is ‘Bearss Seedless’ Lime

LIMES

Are a species of *Fortunella*, a close relative to *Citrus*

‘Nagami’ is a common variety fruiting from November to April; a beautiful compact shrub

KUMQUATS

Citrus reticulata - usually compact trees or shrubs with a weeping or spreading form Many ranges in size, colour and flavour exist because Mandarins hybridize easily through pollination with nearby citrus. For example, ‘Tangelos’ occur as a hybrid of grapefruit pollination. ‘Satusuma’ is a very popular hardy variety

MANDARINS

Musa

Another very popular subtropical fruit, requiring heat (80°F), sun and humidity

Soil pH 5.5 – 6.5

After 18 – 24 months the plants will start to bear fruit, and many suckers (offshoots) will develop







Shallow roots or rhizomes require frequent watering

Only one stalk from the rhizome should be allowed to bear fruit, allow one sucker

BANANAS

- CITRUS TROUBLESHOOTING -

Some common problems that you may encounter & their remedies

<p>New leaves turn pale-green or yellow, new leaves can be completely white! Older leaves turn yellow with veins remaining green</p>	<p>Iron deficiency. Micronutrients or Magnesium may be deficient.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Check soil pH (iron cannot be absorbed at pH above 7.5) - Apply Iron Chelate every 2 weeks during the growing season. (but not in high temp. 90°F) - Improve soil drainage - Use fertilizers with micronutrients
 <p>New foliage turns pale green. Older leaves turn yellow and may drop. Stunted growth overall. Plant has abundant flowers but produces no fruit.</p>	<p>Nitrogen deficient.</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Spray and water with fertilizer high in nitrogen such as 30-10-10 - Make certain the soil is not too wet
 <p>Leaf buds shrivel and turn brown, leaves are curled, distorted, streaks appear on fruit.</p>	<p>Thrips (minute brown Insects) especially invasive in hot, dry climates.</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Spray leaves thoroughly with Trounce. Repeat in 7 days. Do not apply sprays within 7 days of harvest. Do not spray while in bloom.
<p>New leaves are curled and twisted</p>	<p>Aphids, (tiny green, brown, or black sucking insects) usually found clustered on growing shoots.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use insecticide such as pyrethrins or horticultural oil. Repeat as required.
<p>Leaves are stripped. Yellowing, webbing appears over flower buds and between leaves, branches.</p>	<p>Spider Mites, minute brown, red and black spiders. Invasive in hot dry conditions.</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use Safer's spider Mite Spray (use cold water when mixing solution to shock mites) - Keep area clean
<p>White, cottony masses on leaves stems and branches</p>	<p>Mealy bugs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Spray leaves with Trounce - Remove insects with a cotton swab dipped in rubbing alcohol. Do not spray with rubbing alcohol.
<p>Foliage withers, turns yellow and drops; fruits may drop. Sticky substance (honeydew) coats leaves and may develop sooty (black) mould. Tree declines in health.</p>	<p>Cottony scale. Scale insects which excrete honeydew</p> 	<p>Use Horticultural oil spray to suffocate insects. Repeat as required.</p>

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