REEMS CREEK NURSERY

Growing Container Citrus

A Garden Guide



You can grow delicious citrus here in WNC. By growing them in pots, you can enjoy them outdoors in summer and indoors in winter. In addition to their fruits, their scented blooms and glossy foliage make these excellent plants to add to your collection!

Containers and Soil

It is best to choose a container that your plant can live in for several years. As your plant grows, you may consider getting wheeled plant trays or dollies to make it easier to move indoors and out.

Citrus prefer to be on the drier side. A coarse, well-drained potting soil is ideal. You can also add perlite to fine potting soil or just water a fine potting soil less frequently. Citrus are heavy feeders and respond well to fertilizer. We carry multiple organic fertilizers that are suitable for citrus.

Fill your new container with some potting soil, making a mound in the middle deep enough so the original soil line is a few inches below the top of the pot. Remove the original pot and examine the roots. If the roots are circling around, you can very gently loosen and pull, and then arrange the roots evenly around the mound. Once positioned properly - centered, upright, roots gently spread - you can fill the remainder of the pot, being sure to not bury the plant deeper than it was planted in the original pot. Water thoroughly.

Warm season

You can leave your citrus outside when temperatures are above 55F. They need at least 6-8 hours of full sunlight.

Cool season

Move your plant to the brightest heated indoor location you have - a sunny south-facing window is ideal. A grow light may be used to add supplemental lighting.

Watering
Water when the top 2-3" of soil are dry. During the growing season, one deep watering a week is usually sufficient. In the winter, one deep watering every other week is often enough. The biggest risk with citrus is overwatering, so always check the plants first before watering.

Fertilizing
Citrus-specific fertilizers are ideal. Dry or liquid fertilizers are both suitable. Dry fertilizer can be applied monthly during warm weather; liquid fertilizer can be used during weekly waterings. Be sure to read the labels and follow the instructions on whatever fertilizers you choose to use.

Pollination
Citrus are usually self-fertile, which means that you only need 1 plant to produce fruit. When your plants are blooming indoors in winter, you can use cotton swabs or soft paint brushes and jiggle them around the flowers, going from flower to flower, like a bee, in order to ensure adequate pollination and fruit set.

Harvesting
The best ways to know when to harvest are checking to see if the fruits can be easily removed with little resistance, combined with a taste test. While coloring can give you some indication for ripeness, it alone is not reliable. Fruit will not continue to mature once harvested.

Pests
Prevention is the best method. Before bringing plants indoors for the winter, spray them down with water to remove any unwanted pests. You can also apply Neem Oil, Horticultural Oil, Safer Soap, or Spinosad/Captain Jacks - all approved for organic use - to more thoroughly cover your bases. Investigate your plants for overall health during watering sessions, and use any of the above mentioned products as needed. Follow label instructions for application instructions.

Winter Tips
- Avoid overwatering your Citrus in winter. Always check the soil first before watering.

- Citrus prefer moderate (50%) relative humidity. If your heat sources overly dry your air, consider getting a humidifier. If air conditions are too dry, your plants can become stressed and prone to pest infestations. You cannot "fix" dry air by overwatering plants. Version 1.3/1/2023

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