



# How to Grow Dwarf Citrus

Dwarf Citrus are orchard-proven fruit-producing citrus varieties, grafted on cultivar specific dwarfing rootstocks. Grown in the ground, they create a highly productive tree averaging eight feet tall, depending on variety. They will be smaller grown in a container. Deciding to plant dwarf citrus in your garden, rather than standard trees is a great idea. Dwarf citrus allows you to concentrate your collection thus “spread out” available fruit across a season. Starter trees also allow for easier harvest. The following are some guidelines to your success.

## I. Planting Location

A sunny, wind-free, southern exposure is best. Allow room for the tree's ultimate size. It is best to avoid lawns which receive frequent shallow waterings. Microclimates are created by reflective heat from houses or walkways, providing heat for frost protection or summer growth if needed in your area.

## II. Good Drainage Is The Key

Check the drainage by digging a hole 30” deep and filling with water to saturate the soil. The next day refill the hole with water. Drainage is okay if water drops 2” in two hours. If drainage is poor, you will need to amend your soil or plant in a raised bed or container.

## III. For Planting In The Ground

Plant rootball high so that when finished it will be slightly above garden grade. First (upper) roots may be visible. A stake may be needed. Provide a generous watering basin. Do not allow soil or mulch to fill in to cover the trunk. Fill the basin slowly and let it soak in. Water weekly, more or less depending on your soil and climate conditions. We strongly recommend a starter fertilizer, like MASTER START at the rate of one tbspc. per gallon of plant. KEEP THE SOIL MOIST.

## IV. For Planting In A Container

Use a light, well drained organic compost mix. Be sure there are numerous drainage holes. Upper roots may be exposed. Water thoroughly, then fertilize after a week or two. Water weekly or more often if necessary in the summer months. DON'T LET THE TREE DRY OUT.



## V. Fertilizing

Citrus are HEAVY feeders. It is best to use a balanced fertilizer which contains nitrogen, potassium, and phosphorus (12-8-4 ratio) with trace minerals such as

iron, zinc, and manganese, such as Master Nursery Citrus and Avocado food. Fertilize following label instructions. Yellowing leaves are usually an indication of lack of fertilizer or poor drainage. Foliar feeding of trace minerals is effective on maturing flushes of growth.

## VI. Suckering

Know where the graft is on your tree. Remove all growth below the graft. Suckers take vitality from the top of your tree. They are generally very vigorous and some varieties are thorny, some have a different shape leaf than the scion (top stock). Suckers can be prolific in the spring. Cut them down and throw them out.

## VII. Pruning

Trees may be pruned to any desired shape. They will look fuller with occasional pruning to shape leggy branches. Pinching back tips of new growth will help trees to round out. Some trees may develop erratic juvenile growth above the graft. If so, cut it back. Pruning can be done at any time of year except the winter.

## VIII. Frost Protection

The age, location, variety, and condition of the tree, degree and duration of cold determine frost damage. Healthy, well fertilized trees can tolerate brief dips into the upper twenties. Limes and lemons are more sensitive to cold than mandarins, kumquats, and oranges. Anti-transparent sprays like cloud cover, give a few degrees of protection. Christmas lights and or drop cloths will add warmth for unusually cold nights.

