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Citrus

Citrus trees are favored plants in desert landscaping. Hand-picked fresh citrus is a wonderful treat and easy to grow. Unlike deciduous trees, this evergreen shrub will retain the majority of its' leaves year-round and, with proper care, will have a long life. Growth begins in February as the weather warms and slows as the hot, dry summer progresses. A second flush occurs mid-August through October, ending with a dramatic slow down of growth during the winter months.

To ensure that the variety you select will grow well in your area, we strongly suggest buying from a reputable local nursery that grows its own trees. Some varieties are hardier and require less nurturing. The tree you select should have healthy, deep green leaves. The trunk should be straight and the tree should be able to support itself without a stake. It takes a lot of energy for a young tree to grow fruit so it is best to select a tree with little or no fruit or harvest after planting. A newly planted tree will need to conserve energy as it grows new roots and leaves.

Good cultural practices are all that is required to keep insects and diseases to a minimum. If the trees are healthy, insects are seldom a problem. Occasionally fruit can be damaged or scared, but rarely is the health of the tree affected.

Some citrus, mainly lemons and limes, can flower all year long, but the majority of flower production occurs in late February through March. Producing thousands of fragrant blossoms is nature's way of attracting insects that pollinate the maximum number of flowers possible. Depending on the variety, a citrus tree is capable of producing anywhere from 1 to 1000 pounds of fruit per season. Fruit will ripen over a period of 3 – 4 months. and should be allowed to ripen on the tree. The longer the fruit stays on the tree, the sweeter and less acidic it will be.

With proper care, cultural practices, and favorable root stock, a citrus tree is capable of producing fruit in excess of 50 years.



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Proper watering is essential. Mature trees watered with drip or microsprinkler irrigation should also be watered at these intervals. It is important to apply water at the canopy edge and 1 foot beyond where the roots and growing tips are absorbing water and nutrient. **Application intervals for irrigating after planting:**

	Dec-Feb	Mar-Apr	May-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Nov
0-1mo.			2-3 days		
2-3 mos.			3-5 days		
4mo.-1yr.	14 days	7-10 days	5-7 days	2-5 days	5-10 days
1-2 yrs.	14-21 days	10-14 days	7-10 days	7-10 days	10-14 days
3 yrs. +	21-30 days	14-21 days	14 days	10-14 days	14-21 days

(Adapted from Irrigation Citrus Trees, AZ 1151, by Glenn C. Wright)

Citrus are heavy nitrogen feeders and fertilization becomes necessary after a tree had been planted for 2 years. Citrus trees should be fertilized 3 times a year during January, April and August. It is important to incorporate and water when fertilizing. **Annual requirements in pounds for fertilizer after planting:**

New / 0-1yr.	0-0.12 lbs.
Young / 1-2 yrs.	0.25 lbs.
Small young / 2-3 yrs.	0.50 lbs.
Mid-size young / 3-4 yrs.	0.75 lbs.
Small adult / 4-5 yrs.	1.0 lb.
Adult dwarf /4-5	1.0 lb.
Mid-size adult / 5-6 yrs.	1.25 lbs.
Fully grown adult / 5-6 yrs.	1.25 lbs.
Large adult / 6+	1.5 lbs.

Note:

- Five or more years after planting Grapefruit trees use half of amounts shown.
- Pounds of fertilizer are rounded to the nearest quarter or third pound of ease of calculation.
- Fertilizer products have three numbers on the package, e.g., 15-30-15. The first number is nitrogen content.
- Newly planted trees usually require no fertilizer; however, you may apply small amounts of nitrogen after tree is established and new growth has emerged.

Citrus can be infected by a number of diseases. Phytophthora is the most serious affecting the lower plant. This fungus is present in your soil and is most active in wet, overwatered soils. Frost protection is necessary if temperatures drop below 32 degrees.