

# Citrus Care Basics

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## Selecting a Tree

Consider choosing varieties based on cold tolerance, pollination requirements and pest susceptibility. More information on these topics can be found at: <https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/hs132>

## Site Selection

Citrus trees tolerate light shade but will be more productive if grown in full sunlight. Space trees at least 15 feet apart. For added cold protection, plant on the south side of the house.

## Planting

Container grown trees can be planted any time of year. Removing some of the growing media to expose the outer roots before planting will aide in root growth and establishment. Plant in the ground no deeper than they were growing in the pot. Using soil, build a basin that will ideally hold 5-10 gallons of water to soak the root area.

## Watering

Water is extremely important for establishing young trees. Fill the water basin described above twice per week for the first month and at least once per week for the second month. Thereafter, water as needed, especially if wilting of new growth is observed in mid-afternoon and/or drought conditions persist.

## Weed Management

To prevent root rot and other problems, keep the area under the canopy free of grass, weeds and mulch, particularly near the tree trunk.

## Fertilizer & Soil pH

Soil pH should be slightly acidic to near neutral (6.0 to 7.0) for optimal uptake of nutrients. Wait at least 3 weeks after planting to begin applying fertilizer. Using the chart, adopt a fertilizer schedule with applications made between February & October:

Tree Age	Cups of Fertilizer per Application			Applications per year
	6-6-6	8-8-8	10-10-10	
1	.5-1.5 cups	.5-1.25 cups	0.5 cup	6
2	2-4 cups	1.5-3 cups	1.25-2 cups	5
3	3.5-7 cups	2.75-5.5 cups	2-4 cups	4
4	8.5-11.25 cups	6.5-8.25 cups	5.25-6.5 cups	3
5+	12-15.5 cups	9-11.5 cups	7.25-9.25 cups	3

*\*Year 1 starts at planting.*

## Pruning

Remove suckers from the base of the young trees or they will one day interfere with tree development. Mature citrus trees do not require training and pruning for production like other fruit trees. Prune lightly to shape the tree or to remove dead or damaged limbs. Excessive pruning usually results in reduced fruit production, vertical shoots called water sprouts, and/or suckers. These sprouts and suckers should be removed to make room for more productive limbs.

## Citrus Problems

Information on citrus diseases, pest insects, nutrient deficiencies, and disorders like twig dieback, fruit drop, sunburn, fruit splitting and fruit drying, can be found at: <https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/hs141>

Reference: Citrus Culture in the Home Landscape, <https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/hs132>