

# Transplanting your Project Tree



The first step in your Citrus Tree Project will be to transplant the young tree from its container into the 5-gallon pot that will be its home for the next year. It is important to be sure you perform this task correctly. Before undertaking the transplanting, you must have soil or potting media selected. The growing media you select will be very important for it will support the tree for the next year in multiple ways. You have several different options to investigate before selecting a media. Remember, you must use the 5-gallon pot provided. Do not transplant into a bigger pot before the contest.

## Choosing your Media

There are several types of potting mixes available at big box stores and retail nurseries you can choose from. They are made up of several different components or ingredients. Usually, components like sphagnum peat or coconut coir are used to allow the mix to hold water for the plant roots while components like perlite, pine bark and other wood products are used to allow the mix to drain excess water well. Citrus likes well drained soils so look for a mix that says 'well drained' or 'high porosity'. These types of mixes will have higher amounts of components like perlite and pine bark because those provide aeration to the media vs peat. The other very important thing is a mix with a pH range between 5.8 - 6.5, but most readily available potting soils will come in this range.

## Making your own Mix

For those feeling a little more adventurous and looking for a few additional brownie points, you may want to make your own mix. There are many possible combinations of materials that can be used. You will want to have your mix well drained, the pH adjusted to 5.8 - 6.5 with dolomite and may want to include starter fertilizer as well. There is not a single mix that is best, many will work fine. One example would be:

8 quarts sphagnum peat + 10 quarts pine bark + 2 quarts perlite {+ 3 tablespoons of dolomite} = 5 gallons

## Transplant Process

There are several key factors you need to be aware of when transplanting. First, be sure the tree is planted at the same depth in the new pot that it is in the existing smaller one. Do not put soil above the existing soil line of the root ball. You may have to remove some roots off the bottom portion of the tree so it can fit in the new pot. Next be sure the tree roots are spread out in the container. If you see roots that are wrapping around the root ball, you will need to straighten them out in the 5-gallon container. Gently loosen the roots. Add soil and firmly pack it around your tree leaving about an inch of space between the soil line and top of container. Water in slowly and thoroughly until water flows out bottom holes and don't water again until media begins to dry out in the top 2-3 inches.

