

# Citrus Trees

Living in the desert southwest we are blessed to have the ideal climate for citrus trees. Citrus trees, due to their non-deciduous nature, are able to thrive in our mild winter and spring months, and then slow their growth in the colder and hotter months. Due to their ability to slow their growth, versus going dormant, citrus trees maintain their leaves and beauty all year long. They do not, however, grow as well in areas that experience a great deal of Frost, such as Northern Arizona They must be protected during any periods of frost, as well as periods of extreme heat because of their high susceptibility to frost damage and sun burn. In the winter months, during periods of Frost, you will want to look towards covering your citrus trees with burlap or cotton, such as old sheets, and you will want to be sure to never use plastic. During the hot summer months you will not want to prune your trees, and only sparingly if needed. The foliage of the trees help to protect their sensitive branches from sun damage. The trunk of a citrus tree is just as sensitive, but it can be easily protected by painting the trunk with a 50/50 mixture of white latex paint or wrapping the trunk shade cloth or burlap.

As many citrus tree fans know, the flowers produced by the trees can be extremely fragrant, which attract a variety of pollinating insects that are responsible for the fruit production. Some citrus varieties, such as lemon and lime trees, can even produce the fragrant blossoms all year long. Surprisingly enough, however, only about one to two percent of the fragrant blossoms produced by one tree will actually yield fruit. Keep in mind that the average citrus tree will not begin producing fruit for two to four years, and it has been found that they will produce anywhere from one to one-thousand pounds of fruit per growing season, which generally occur during February and March, and once again from August to October.

Now, besides proper protection of your tree you will also want to concentrate on proper care. Proper care will involve a few simple steps that will assist your trees in improved growth and fruit production. The first step will be proper watering. The key is to remember that water should not be allowed to touch the trunk of your citrus tree, so you will need to plant your tree with a downward slope from your trunk. At the drip line, which can be considered equivalent to the widest part of the branches, also known as the canopy, you will want to build a berm. The berm will hold the water in until it can be absorbed into the drip line of the tree, allowing for deep watering, while the upward slope towards the trunk will prevent water from touching the trunk. Deep watering, without over watering, is a vital part of having ripe fruit. I recommend a watering schedule that allows your citrus trees to dry out in between waterings. After first planting your citrus tree you will want to water every three to five days, and after the first summer you will look to water every 15-20 days in the winter months, and every 7-10 days in the summer months. To check for adequate watering, which you will want approximately 3 feet deep in the soil around your drip line, you may use a soil probe. Now, as your tree grows you will also want to remember to move your berm outwards to accommodate for a growing drip line. Besides proper watering, fertilization of your citrus trees is an important aspect in maintaining their health, growth, and vitality. I recommend using my [Extreme Granules Citrus Blend](#) with [Mycorrhizae](#), which will provide your citrus trees with vital nutrients and allow them to better handle environmental stress. You will want to fertilize

your citrus trees 3 times a year, or every 4 months, and you can look to follow the following table for the amount of fertilizer needed:

<b>Size of Tree</b>	<b>Amount of Extreme Granules-Citrus Blend Needed</b>
Dwarf (container)	1-2 Cups per tree
Dwarf	4-6 lbs. per tree
Midsized to Large	4-8 lbs. per tree
Extra Large/Mature	10-20 lbs. per tree

Would you like ideas on different types of citrus trees, or do you need to know of a great place to buy citrus trees?! Greenfield Citrus is one of my favorite citrus tree providers in the valley.

[www.greenfieldcitrus.com](http://www.greenfieldcitrus.com)