

GROWING CITRUS

Citrus are not generally hardy in the UK but can be grown outdoors in the summer and brought inside for winter. Of the varieties available Lemons are the most cold tolerant followed by Limes, whilst Oranges need a little more warmth.

Fragrant white flowers can appear all year round but are most abundant in late winter. Fruit ripens up to twelve months later so often fruit and flowers appear together. All citrus are self-fertile so a single plant will produce fruit.

Grow in pots outdoors from June until late September and take undercover for winter. A conservatory, heated greenhouse or other light position is ideal, we keep most of ours in poly tunnels and wrap in fleece if the weather looks to be very cold. Centrally heated living rooms are not ideal.

Repot annually in March or remove a couple of inches of compost and replace if the plant is getting large. When re-potting use a John Innes No.2 compost with some added grit.

In summer water freely but allowing the plants to dry out a little between watering's, in winter over watering is one of the most common forms of problems so err on the dry side. The colder the plant is kept the less water it will need, but that does not mean none at all!

Feed regularly during the growing season and less often in winter. Use a citrus feed when watering or a slow release fertiliser such as osmacote (which is what we use on the nursery).

Little pruning is required, remove crowded shoots in February, pinch back the tips of vigorous growths during summer and if the plants get leggy you can prune back by half.

Most citrus are grafted onto a rootstock so be sure to remove 'suckers' from below the graft.

Pests - Mealybug, Red spider and Scale insects can be troublesome.

