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### **CITRUS TREE CARE**

Citrus offer fresh fruit during the long winter months. Citrus are extremely fragrant and very easy to grow indoors. Colorful fruit provide fresh flavors right in your home and fragrant Citrus blooms almost year round!

Citrus prefer hot sunny locations. The warmer days and cool nights provide sweeter fruit. Warm days and warm nights provide thicker skinned fruit to protect the Citrus.

#### **The Steps to growing Citrus in Minnesota!**

Dwarf grafted varieties are the easiest to grow. They are early blooming and produce acid fruit rather than sweet. Best flavors to grow are lemons and limes.

#### **Getting started today with Citrus Indoors –**

1. Light- Bright Sunlight from a South facing window is the best. The more light the more fruit set. Artificial light recommended is a 100 or 200 watt bulb of cool white warm light.
2. Location – Avoid heaters and cold drafts. Provide adequate amounts of humidity with a humidifier, water standing in trays or pebbles between the container and saucer.
3. Temperature- Bright sunny location around 50-60 degrees. After Thanksgiving cool back to 45-55 degrees.

**Citrus Care** -Transplanting Citrus- Best time to transplant is March-May. When repotting move up 2 container sizes at a time. If you would like to keep your Citrus in the same pot the plant may be root pruned similar to a bonsai situation.

**Choosing the right soil** – Sterile packaged lightweight houseplant soil is fine. Make sure the mix is light to provide drainage and aeration. Citrus do prefer a slightly acid soil with a pH of 5 to 7.

**Choosing the right container** – Consider the size of the Citrus and the moving between indoors and out when choosing a container. Plant caddies are excellent for moving heavy planters. Clay pots allow for the soil to breath. Make sure the container has drainage holes.

**Watering and Fertilizing**- Use tap water that is distilled and water from the top down. Thoroughly water but allow no standing water. Let Citrus dry out completely but not bone dry. Mist plants to provide humidity. Best Fertilizer is a 20-20-20; do not fertilize 4 weeks before moving plants out and 4 weeks before bringing them in. During the summer allow for more nitrogen. Citrus need zinc, magnesium, and iron. Foliar feed with fish emulsion.

**Pruning**- Citrus are vigorous growers you may prune at anytime. You may need to select fruit to remove to balance the weight of the branch.

**Flowers and Pollinization** – Shaking the branch or transplanting pollen flower to flower with a q-tip may be needed if you keep your plants indoors.

### **Moving Citrus Outdoors**

1. Stop fertilizing 4 weeks prior to moving them out.
2. Move them out the end of May or frost has passed.
3. Gradually move them into the sun to prevent shock.
4. Repot if necessary.

### **Moving Citrus Indoors**

1. Move Citrus in when night temps are between 40-50 degrees.
2. Stop fertilizing 4 weeks prior to moving them indoors.
3. Clean foliage with a water hose, check for insects.
4. Spray if needed with natural insecticides.

### **Trouble Shooting**

Yellow leaves then dropping- Citrus may be shocked with the continual temperature change moving them in and out. Drastic light changes from dark to light or no humidity.

Yellow leaves- Water may be too cold or too hard.

Grease spots- Shield tree from this fungus that makes leaves turn yellow and fall off by spraying with horticultural oil once in July.

Spider mites, scale or aphids- Change from warm to cool; or light to dark encourages their appearance. Treat with insecticidal soap.

### **Harvesting Fresh Citrus**

Fruit at room temperatures yields most juice

Roll your fruit on a counter or hard surface to bring the juice up

Grate peels and freeze in sealed plastic bags

Most fresh juice may be kept for 4 months

Loaded with vitamins, fresh citrus have a natural inhibitor for vitamin C oxidation keeps avocados, bananas and apples from bruising when fresh juice is squeezed on them.

Flavor will last longer if kept in a sealed plastic bag

Certain varieties ripen longer if they remain unpicked, others re-green on the tree.