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PC-16 Dwarf Citrus -- Lemon, Lime, Orange, Grapefruit & Kumquat

Citrus trees make wonderful patio trees during northern Nevada's summer months and transform into houseplants which produce a beautiful fragrance during the winter.

General Information

Dwarf citrus trees are especially suited for container growing, making them easy to move indoors to avoid our cold winter temperatures. The container overcomes the poor soil and dry climate of Nevada. Citrus trees are not tropical plants – plants that live in a narrow temperature range year round. Instead, they thrive in a Mediterranean climate where winter days are cool and short and summer days are warm and long. Citrus trees enjoy low night time temperatures and warm day time temperatures. They require at least eight hours of full sun exposure year round.

Citrus can be left outdoors from late spring through summer and into early fall when there is no danger of frost. This will keep your plant healthier and reduce the potential for pest damage. Choose a site with at least ½ day of sun – a deck, patio, etc. – close enough to your house or greenhouse so it is easy to move indoors in the fall.

In the fall, move your citrus indoors, after first spraying it well with water to remove any unwanted pests, to a location with significant light, like a south wall with windows or better yet a solarium. Or you can use a grow light, turned on about 16 hours/day. Keep your plant cool during the winter; do not put it in front of a heater vent or close to other heat sources.

The transition from indoors to outdoors and vice-versa should take several days. An abrupt transition either way can cause leaf and fruit drop.

Most citrus varieties are self-fertile so only one plant is needed for fruit production. Since they typically bloom in the winter, you may want to help move pollen from flower to flower with a small brush. Citrus fruit usually takes seven to nine months to ripen – typical

Potting

We recommend that you repot your newly purchased citrus tree as soon as possible. Choose a pot size 1 ½ to 2 times the diameter of the pot in which it was purchased. Use a potting soil that does not contain chemical wetting agents or fertilizers and never add to a potting soil products such as compost, planting mixes, or conditioners. We recommend **G & B Blue Ribbon Potting Soil**. As your citrus grows be prepared to have a pot up to 28 inches wide. Expect to repot it every 2 years.

Watering and Humidity

Citrus require soil that is moist but never soggy. **Do not water if the top of the soil is dry without checking the soil at the root level.** Citrus should become moderately dry between waterings.

Develop a watering schedule so the roots maintain even moisture, but are not waterlogged. Water before leaves show wilting and when roots have reached about 50% dryness. If a wilted tree perks up within 24 hours after being watered, then its roots got too dry. Adjust the watering schedule accordingly. A tree with yellow or cupped leaves or leaves that don't perk up after watering most likely has been overwatered and has soggy roots. Water less frequently.

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While they winter indoors, watering between 14 and 21 days is not unusual due to the large container and allows for a longer duration of humid soil and less exposure to wet soil. While outside in the heat of summer, everyday water may be needed simply because of our wind, dry air, and high heat. Always water thoroughly, allowing water to drain out the drain holes at the bottom of the container. When indoors, elevate the pot above the drain saucer with pot feet or similar product to prevent reabsorption of the drain water.

This also allows humid air to accumulate around the tree. When outdoors, do not use any drainage saucer. Over-watering or not providing proper drainage will cause leaf drop and then death. When indoors citrus will quickly slow its metabolism to protect itself from further stress.

Fertilizing

Fertilizing during the growth stage of your citrus is required. Approximately one month prior to moving the citrus outside, apply an organic based citrus and fruit tree fertilizer. We recommend **G&B Organics Citrus and Fruit Tree Fertilizer**. Fertilize after the citrus has been moved outside with **G&B Organics All Purpose Liquid Fertilizer** at monthly intervals to encourage new growth and excellent fruit development. Stop fertilizing by the end of August. Do not fertilize during the winter months.

Pests

Citrus are usually not bothered by pests when outdoors. Indoors, the most common pests are scale, aphids and spider mites. When indoors, inspect your plant every time you water. Scale is dark grey or brown and looks like a little bump on stems and trunk. Control scale by removing them with rubbing alcohol or spraying with **Bonide All Seasons Horticultural Oil** at the summer rate. Spider mites live on the undersides of leaves and make some fine webs. **Bonide All Seasons Horticultural Oil** will control aphids and spider mites.

If you find these pests on your citrus, consider the environment in which the citrus is growing. Citrus can be pest free if they are healthy. Over-fertilizing or over-watering will weaken your citrus and likely lead to an insect problem.

Pruning

After harvesting your crop of citrus and well before new growth starts, simple tip-pruning is recommended. The tree will have that nice tight look with removing just a few inches off the outer branches, in particular the longer branches. Any thorns which may form may be pruned off at the thorn base.

Any sucker growth (growth from below the graft union) should be removed immediately to its origins. Sucker growth is from the root stock which is what creates the dwarf characteristics but has no other benefits such as fruit to offer. If allowed to grow, the graft union will fail and this will result in an undesirable tree.

8/16

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CITRUS CARE

