

Care  
Guide



All citrus  
are evergreen

# Citrus *made easy*



[www.haskins.co.uk](http://www.haskins.co.uk)



**HASKINS**  
for garden pleasure

# Care of citrus plants

Citrus trees are attractive indoor plants that have fragrant white flowers which can occur several times a year followed by small fruits.

They enjoy high light levels so will do well on a windowsill or for larger citrus trees a conservatory is ideal. Be careful of midday sun through glass, as leaf scorch will occur. During the summer months citrus trees like to be outside in a sheltered sunny spot. To allow them to get used to outside conditions place in a slightly shaded area for about 2-3 weeks. Do the same before you bring them back indoors for the winter. This will help reduce stress to the plant which could cause leaf drop. Citrus trees also benefit from a cool period over winter to allow the plant to rest and to help control pests and diseases.

---

## Watering

---

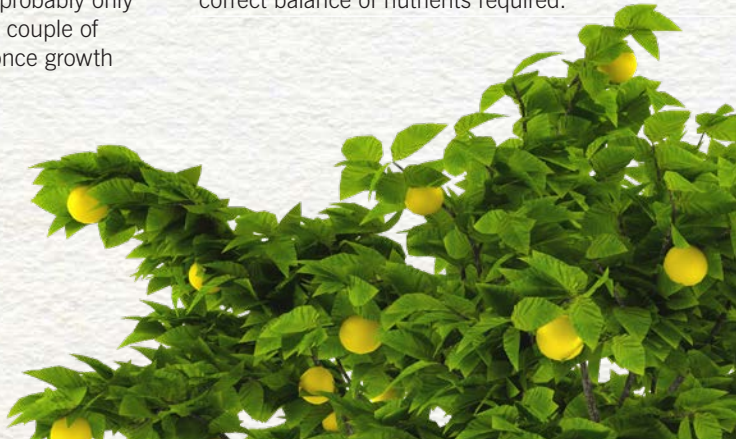
Watering varies depending on where the citrus is situated - a plant in a hot conservatory in summer will need much more water than a plant kept outside and a plant in a cool conservatory in the winter will probably only need to be watered once every couple of weeks. Increase the watering once growth starts in spring.

---

## Feeding

---

Feeding - trees should be fed once a week with a specific citrus fertiliser. There are two types available, a summer and a winter fertiliser which will provide the tree with the correct balance of nutrients required.





## Possible problems:

**Flowers not turning to fruit:**  
Not all flowers set and form fruit, to improve this mist the flowers and avoid dry hot conditions.

**Leaf drop:**  
Citrus trees are evergreen and will naturally drop an odd leaf from time to time. If leaf drop is excessive the tree could be too dry or not have enough light.

## General Cultivation

All citrus are evergreen and generally prefer high light levels all year round. Growing your own oranges and lemons can be achieved surprisingly easily, providing they can be over-wintered in a frost-free, preferably heated, glasshouse or conservatory.

In summer they can be moved outdoors as temperatures rise and the last chance of frost has passed. This also prevents citrus leaves becoming scorched by the hot sun if left under glass all summer. They should be acclimatised gradually by placing them in a slightly shady spot for two to three weeks before moving them to a sunny position.

## Fruiting

Citrus will not ripen and fall like most other fruit. Instead the fruit will remain on the plant until it is harvested, sometimes for up to six months in the case of oranges. The fruit will become dry and shrivelled if left on the plant for too long.



Citrus  
limon

---

## Temperature

---

Citrus can tolerate temperatures as low as 4°C (40°F) however it is best to maintain an optimum temperature of between 10 to 15°C (50 to 60°F) during the winter months. Citrus will not enjoy spending the summer in a glasshouse even though they are tolerant of high temperatures.

Ventilation is necessary as citrus prefer fairly constant air movement and will not benefit from static conditions. Citrus are not adversely affected by drafts, but an important rule to remember is to keep plants either cold and dry or warm and wet.

---

## Pruning

---

Citrus do not require regular pruning but they can be pruned for shape as and when needed.

---

## Varieties

---

Lemons (*Citrus limon*) are the easiest for beginners to start citrus cultivation.

Citrus limon 'Four Seasons' is particularly recommended and is ideal for gin and tonic!

The compact calamondin orange (x *Citrofortunella microcarpa*) is ideal for small spaces such as a windowsill.

Lemons (*Citrus limon*) and limes (*Citrus aurantiifolia*) will require more space but prefer cooler conditions to oranges (*Citrus sinensis*) and kumquats (*Fortunella japonica*) which prefer warmer glasshouses or conservatories and also benefit from higher light levels.

### Did you know?

In the tropics, all citrus fruit is green in colour because the rind (skin) is purely cosmetic and does not reflect the ripeness of the fruit. Growing citrus in cooler, temperate climates causes the fruit to adopt more recognisable colours.