Container-Grown Citrus

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Citrus trees provide interesting and attractive additions to Texas landscapes with their foliage, blooms, and fruit.

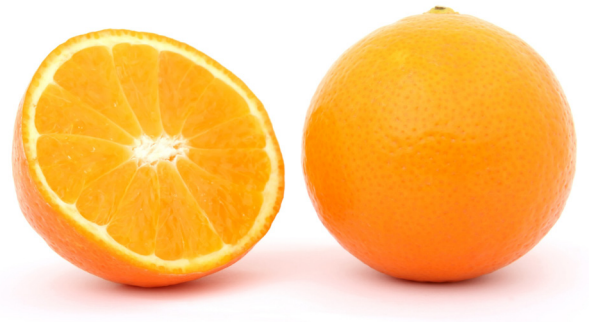
Grow it

Varieties

- Some varieties of kumquats, satsumas, and tangerines have better cold tolerance and may be grown with very occasional protection from the more severe frosts and freezes.
- Because the average citrus seedling requires 7 to 15 years to flower and fruit, make sure you buy your tree from a local nursery for shorter fruiting time.

Planting

- Plant trees in a 20- to 30-gallon container (about the size of a whiskey barrel).
- Yields will be small because the amount of fruit produced will be proportional to the tree's size, which will be limited by the size of the container in which it is grown.



Watering

- Water only as needed. Allow the upper 1 inch of soil to become dry before applying water to slowly fill the container. Allow the excess water to drain from the bottom of the container.
- Because cool weather slows plant growth, water less often in the winter.

Care During Season

- Fertilize trees with a water-soluble fertilizer according to label directions. Generally, mature foliage with deep green color indicates adequate nutrition.
- During freezing weather, provide cold protection or move container-grown trees indoors.
- If moving trees indoors for the entire winter, provide partial shade 2 to 4 weeks before moving to acclimate them to lower light levels.
- To overcome leggy growth when grown indoors, cut back the entire top by about one-third during February.
- Twig dieback and leaf drop may occur if the top gets too large for the root system. Moderately prune the trees to balance the top with the roots.
- Add a slow release fertilizer like Osmocote.

Pests and Diseases

- Citrus trees are susceptible to a fatal disease called citrus greening. Two quarantines prevent the movement of infected trees to new locations in Texas. For more information, see the Citrus Greening in Texas website at *plantclinic.tamu.edu/citrusgreening/*.
- If something does not look right with your plant, contact your county Extension agent for more information.

Sun: **Full**

Soil: **Well-drained**

Planting: **Late Winter to Early Spring**

Harvest: **Oct.–Dec.**

Life Cycle: **Perennial**

Container Friendly

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Path to the Plate

Buy it

- Choose citrus fruits that feel heavy compared to their size and have firm, smooth skin. Choose kumquats that are firm, not soft.

Store it

- In the refrigerator, lemons and oranges will keep for up to 2 weeks, and grapefruits will keep for up to 3 weeks.
- Oranges can be stored at room temperature for 1 to 2 days and grapefruit for up to 1 week.
- For canning and preservation instructions, visit *nchfp.uga.edu.*

Use it

Roasted Tilapia with Orange Parsley Salsa

Course: Main Dish Serves: 4

Ingredients:

- 3 oranges (about 1 pound)
- ¼ cup chopped fresh parsley, divided
- 2 Tbsp extra virgin olive oil, divided
- ¾ teaspoon salt, divided
- 4 4-oz tilapia fillets
- ½ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper, divided
- 2 cups hot cooked instant brown rice

Instructions:

Preheat oven to 400°F.

Sprinkle fish evenly with ¼ teaspoon salt and ¼ teaspoon pepper. Place fish in an oven-proof skillet coated with remaining 1 tablespoon oil. Bake at 400°F for 14 minutes or until fish reaches an internal temperature of 145 degrees.

Grate 2 teaspoons orange zest from rind. Peel and section oranges over a bowl, chop the sections.

Combine zest, chopped orange, parsley, 1 tablespoon oil, and ¼ teaspoon salt, and ¼ teaspoon pepper in a bowl; toss well.

Serve the cooked tilapia on a bed of brown rice, topped with the orange and parsley salsa.

Orange and Ginger Salmon

Course: Main Dish Serves: 4

Ingredients:

- 2 pounds fresh salmon fillet
- ¼ cup honey
- 1 Tbsp fresh orange zest
- 2 Tbsp freshly squeezed orange juice
- 1 Tbsp fresh grated ginger root
- 2 garlic cloves, grated
- 1 orange, thinly sliced

Instructions:

Preheat oven to 400°F. Cover a large baking sheet with heavy-duty foil.

Remove salmon from packaging and place on the covered baking sheet, scales down.

Combine the honey, orange zest, orange juice, ginger, and garlic in a glass jar. Cover the jar with a lid and shake until all is mixed well.

Pour dressing over salmon on the pan.

Thinly slice one orange and place around salmon.

Bake salmon for 25 to 30 minutes until it reaches an internal temperature of 145 degrees. A thermometer should be measured at the thickest part of the fillet.

Learn about it

Lemons

- Lemons are free of fat, saturated fat, sodium, and cholesterol.
- They are low calorie and are high in vitamin C.

Oranges

- Oranges are free of fat, saturated fat, sodium, and cholesterol.
- They are high in vitamin C and are a good source of dietary fiber.

Grapefruit

- Grapefruits are free of fat, saturated fat, sodium, and cholesterol.
- They are high in vitamins A and C.

Information gathered by Aggie Horticulture