

GROWING LEMONS

Growing a lemon tree is not that difficult. As long as you provide their basic needs, growing lemons can be a very rewarding experience.

Cape Rough : Winter lemon with a dark, rough skin and juicy fruit.

Eureka : Year round bearer. Thin smooth skin, juicy and almost seedless fruit.

Lisbon : Year round bearer especially winter and spring. Juicy, seedless fruit with thin skin.



Site, soil and planting

For optimal growth plant lemon trees in full sun. While lemon trees can tolerate a range of soils, including poor soil, most prefer well-drained, slightly acidic loamy soil. Lemon trees should be set slightly higher than ground. Therefore, dig a hole somewhat shallower than the length of the root ball. Place the tree in the hole and replace soil, tamping firmly as you go. Add some mulch to help retain moisture, keep the soil moist and control weeds. Lemon trees require deep watering once a week. Apply water to the soil around a lemon tree slowly, allowing it to sink into the soil.

When planting citrus in pots use potting soil to which you have added a handful of bonemeal or 2:3:2 fertiliser. When planting in the ground add compost to the soil and a handful of bonemeal or 2:3:2 fertiliser.

Feeding

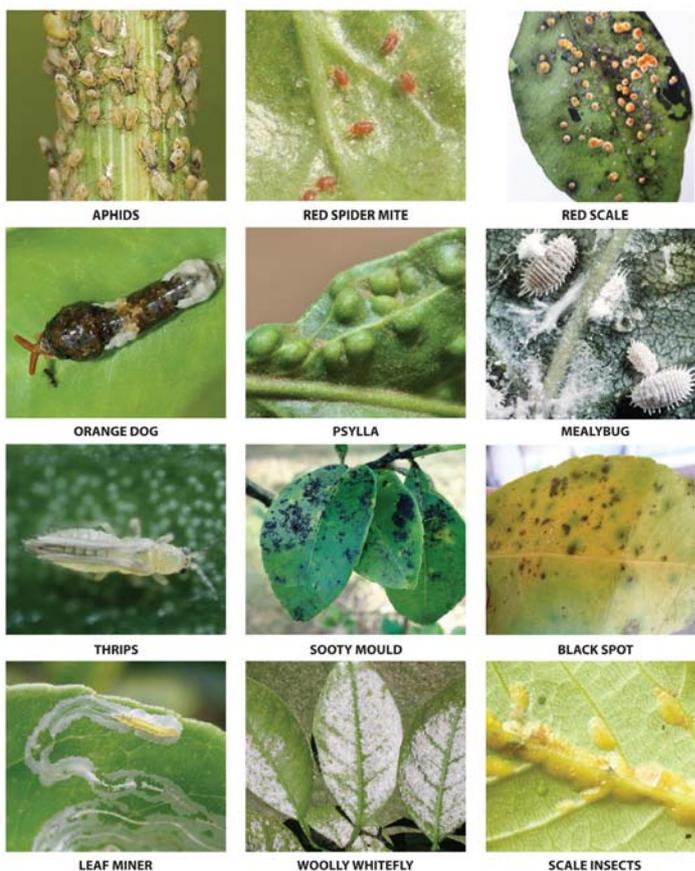
Feed nutrient deficient lemon trees (yellowing of the leaf) with Magnesium Sulphate, Starke Ayres Nutrifeed or Trelmix. Lemon trees should be fed regularly with a slow release organic fertilizer high in nitrogen such as 3:1:5 Organic or Gorganic liquid fertilizer.

Causes and prevention of fruit drop in lemons:

In many cases, lemon tree fruit drop is due to environmental factors that you can't control. Sudden changes in temperature and heavy rains can often cause premature fruit drop. Lemon tree fruit drop can also be caused by improper watering or fertilization, excessive pruning and insect infestations.

Problems

Whiteflies, aphids, scales and mites sometimes infest lemon trees. They may cause premature fruit drop and blemish the fruit. Use horticultural oils in late winter and early spring when the insects are in the larval or "crawler" phase of their lifecycle. For small trees, a strong blast of water from a hose will knock some of the insects from the tree, and insecticidal soaps or neem oil sprays are somewhat effective in controlling adult insects.



Allow lemon trees to grow naturally without pruning as much as possible. Remove dead, damaged or diseased limbs as needed, but if you need to control the size of the tree, do so with the fewest possible cuts.

When life gives you lemons, you can do more than make lemonade. From eliminating odors to juicing your daily beauty regimen, there are so many practical uses for lemons around the house.



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