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Pest Control and Fertilizer Schedule for Dooryard Citrus

Pest Control

In-House Publication 001

Scouting for pests and treating only when necessary is the method of pest control called Integrated Pest Management (IPM). An exception to this IPM program is when homeowners are trying to control the Asian citrus psyllid, the vector of citrus greening. Most pest problems (in mature trees) cause cosmetic damage and do not alter the taste of the fruit. Read all pesticide labels carefully before buying and using these products on your dooryard citrus trees. As with all pesticides, the intended crop must appear on the label for legal use on that plant species.

The yearly schedule below will help in the maintenance of your citrus trees. If at any time there is a question to the health of your citrus tree, please contact the Master Gardeners at the Manatee County Extension Office at (941) 722-4524. Specimens can also be brought in for diagnosis to the Plant Diagnostic Clinic located at 1303 17th Street West in Palmetto (on the Manatee County Fairgrounds). The office is open daily (except on Wednesday) from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm.

DECEMBER-JANUARY

- No necessary action unless you wish to do a dormant spray for citrus psyllid prior to new growth in the spring.

FEBRUARY-MARCH

- **Scab** susceptible varieties include grapefruit, Temple, Murcott, lemons, sour orange, Satsuma, and Minneola tangelo. Sprays may be required only if disease has been a problem in previous years. Temple is usually the only variety that requires control of scab.
- If sprays are required, a copper fungicide should be applied to prevent infection on new growth and young fruit. Additional sprays may be required at monthly intervals to prevent infection of additional flushes or expanding fruit. Copper will also control alternaria on Dancy tangerine and Minneola tangelo.
- **Aphids** may become a problem on new growth of young trees. If present, apply horticultural oil or insecticidal soap. Control on mature trees is generally not needed as damage is not usually significant enough to warrant spraying.
- For **citrus leafminers** (on new growth), little control is available. Either let it alone or spray horticultural oil twice, spaced two weeks apart, only when new flush is present. This will give protection to the new growth.

MARCH-APRIL

- For **rust mites** and **spider mites,** apply horticultural oil or a general miticide registered for citrus.
- You may apply a post-bloom nutritional spray containing copper, zinc and manganese when approximately 2/3 of the petals have fallen. The copper in the nutritional spray is the second spray for scab or alternaria and will help control melanose.

- If you do not use a nutritional spray, use another product containing copper fungicide and registered for use on citrus scab. In most cases, we do not generally recommend spraying for melanose control.

NOTE: Never mix any products containing oil and sulfur. Wait three weeks between applications of products containing oil and sulfur.

MAY

- **Whiteflies** and **scale** may be a problem. Their excretion (called honey dew) drips onto the leaves or fruit below which a black, soot-like mold grows on the surface. By controlling the insect with horticultural oil or insecticidal soap, the sooty mold residue will eventually disappear from the leaf's surface and/or fruit surfaces.

JUNE-JULY

- To prevent greasy spot, the timing of the spray is critical. Apply horticultural oil some time during the period between June 15 and July 15. In locations with heavy greasy spot, a second spray may be needed in early August.

AUGUST-SEPTEMBER** and **OCTOBER-NOVEMBER

- Miticides may be used for rust and spider mites, if needed.

Materials	Pests Controlled
Copper fungicide	Scab, greasy spot, alternaria, melanose
Horticultural oil[1]	Most scale insects, mites, aphids, whiteflies, mealy bugs, grasshoppers and katydids
Miticides, horticultural oil[1]	Rust mites and spider mites

[1]Do not apply when temperature is over 94°F. Do not apply oil within 3 weeks of an application containing sulfur. Do not spray oil after October as this may increase tree susceptibility to cold damage.

Fertilizer Schedule

Young trees are one to five years after planting. Due to the number of fertilizer applications, we recommend marking your calendar with the dates you need to fertilize your trees.

Table 2- Suggested Fertilization[2] Rates for Citrus Trees up to Five Years of Age[3]

Years Since Planting	Number of Applications per Year	Pounds per Tree per Application
First	5-6	0.75-1.25
Second	4-5	1.75-2.25
Third	3-4	3.00-4.00
Fourth	3-4	3.50-4-50
Fifth	3-4	4.00-5.00

[2]Recommended fertilizer analysis is 8-8-8 for N-P-K (1.6-0.4-0.2-0.025 for Mg-Mn-Cu-B)
[3] Reduce applications for trees planted in colder locations or in more northerly latitudes.

For older trees (*ones that were planted over five years ago*), fertilize only three times per year: late January-February, May and October-November. The rate is one pound per year of tree age, up to a maximum of ten pounds per application. This means that a fully mature tree (*one that is 10 years or older*) would receive three separate applications of ten pounds for a total of thirty pounds of fertilizer per year. For additional fertilizer information, please contact the county extension agent.

10/2010 Information compiled & edited by Steve Futch, Citrus Extension Agent & Lisa Hickey, Manatee County Extension Agent