

The Backyard Orchard – Citrus Module 2 – Choosing & Planting Your Citrus Tree



LSU AgCenter Backyard Orchard Certificate
Course

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Your Citrus Tree is a Long-Term Investment

Average Lifespan of Most Citrus is 50 Years



One of two original
Navel Orange trees
planted in 1873 at
Riverside, CA

The Most Important Step!!!

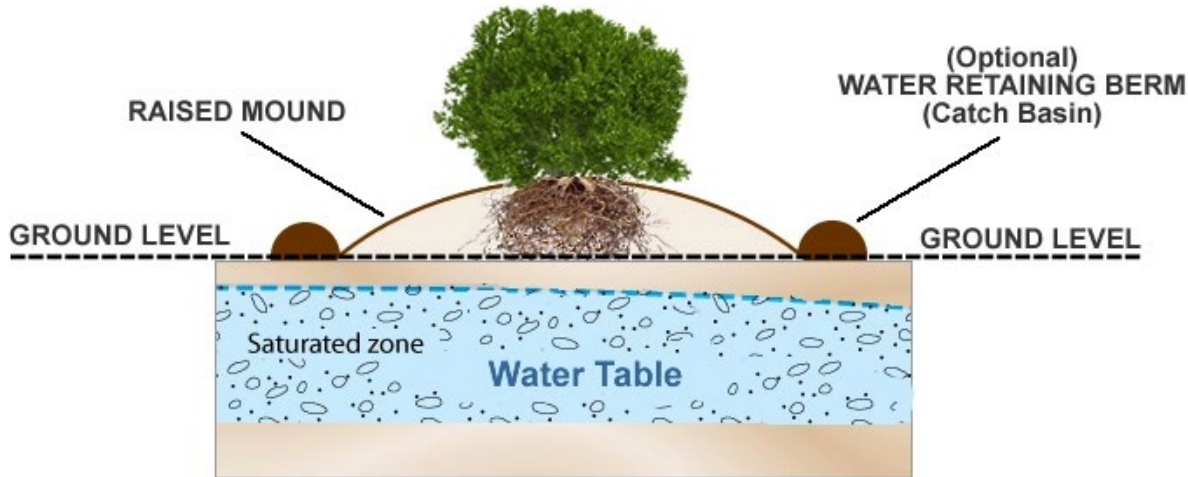
Site Selection

Whether growing your citrus inground or a container:

- Minimum of 8 hours of direct sunlight
- Excellent soil drainage
- Good fertility – Soil Test
- Soil pH 6.0-7.0
- Space
- Sheltered location for cold sensitive varieties

Improving Drainage

- Create a raised mound 12-18" high to plant your tree on.
- Add sand and organic matter to increase drainage.
- Use a raised bed to grow your tree.



Raised Mound Planting



Choosing A Citrus Tree

- Choose a type and variety based on:
 - What fruit you like
 - Amount of space you have
 - Expected temperature extreme lows
- Select a 2-4' tall tree with 3-4 well-developed branches
- Certified disease-free tree (side note on quarantine)



Citrus Quarantine

Plant quarantines are established to prevent the introduction of economically important plant pathogens or insect pests into a region where it does not occur.

The following parishes are quarantined for Citrus Canker: Jefferson, Lafourche, Orleans, Plaquemines, St. Bernard, St. Charles, St. James and St. John.

The following parishes are quarantined for Citrus Greening: Jefferson, Orleans, Plaquemines, St. Bernard and Washington.

Any citrus nursery stock that is sold or moved into a parish that is quarantined must have a label attached to the plant or container with the following statement: PROHIBITED FROM MOVEMENT OUTSIDE OF THE CITRUS QUARANTINE AREAS
Penalty for Violation, Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry.



The labeling requirement is only for the Citrus Canker and Citrus Greening Quarantines.

The following parishes are quarantined for Asian Citrus Psyllid: Jefferson, Orleans, Lafourche, Plaquemines, St. Bernard, St. Charles, St. James, St. Tammany, Tangipahoa, and Terrebonne.

Planting – Hole Preparation

- The best time to plant citrus trees is January/February
- Water tree in container the day before you plant it
- Dig a hole 1.5-2x the pot diameter BUT only as deep as the container
- Plant tree at same depth or slightly higher as it was in the pot
- If holes are dug too deeply, tree may sink when watered and soil settles – planting slightly above soil line is better than below soil line.
- Trees planted too deeply are more prone to disease



Planting – Check the Roots Prior to Planting

- Remove tree from container and examine roots.
- Roots should be just reaching the pot side. Loosen roots to encourage lateral growth
- Check the roots for bent or circling roots. Separate and trim roots if root-bound.
- Prune damaged roots
- If taproot is curled in container bottom, cut it off where it begins to curl, regrows



Healthy root system, just reaching pot edge



Healthy root system but slightly pot-bound. Tease the roots out from the ball to discourage circling.



Pot-bound root system. Large roots are circling. Root system needs pruning to encourage lateral growth.

Planting – Backfill and Watering

- Backfill with the same soil you removed from the hole
- DO NOT add any fertilizer or amendments to the backfill
- During backfilling, water to settle soil and eliminate air pockets
- Fill hole to completion and water again
- Construct a ridge around tree to hold water for subsequent watering, 2-3 ft. diameter.



After Planting

- Add a 2-3" layer of good organic mulch around the newly planted tree
- DO NOT fertilize for the first 6 weeks after planting
- Fertilize with about ½ lb. of 8-8-8 or 13-13-13 six weeks after planting (or follow soil test recommendations)
- REMOVE all fruit the first year. Fruit production uses a lot of resources and the first year should be devoted to root development and tree establishment.



To Stake or Not To Stake

- Many container citrus come with a stake
- You may reuse this after planting
- Young citrus trees are limber and may need staking, especially in windy areas
- Staking is not a necessity but may help the tree keep its shape
- DO NOT tightly tie around the tree trunk, this will cut into the tree and cause damage
- Remove the stake and bindings as the tree grows





Please post all your questions and results to the message board that was emailed to you.