

Citrus Production in Alabama

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System

Root Stock

- Trifoliolate Orange
 - Great rootstock for satsuma
 - Good cold hardiness
 - Large tree
- Flying Dragon
 - Dwarf selection of trifoliolate orange
 - Trees are 1/5 to 1/3 normal size
 - Ideal for high tunnel production

Site Selection

- Full sun is best
- Well drained soil

Cultivars

- Owari
- Kimbrough
- Brown's Select
- Armstrong Early
- Port Neches

Spacing

- Space plants on trifoliolate rootstocks 15 feet apart in the row and 20 feet between rows
- Space plants on Flying Dragon rootstocks 8 feet apart in the row and 15 feet between rows
- High Tunnel Spacing 10 feet Trifoliolate, 8 feet Flying Dragon

Pruning

- Prune any sprouts that develop below the graft
- Remove any dead or damaged branches
- Prune to control height
 - Use thinning cuts instead of heading cuts
 - Thin in spring after danger of frost

Training

- The scaffolds or primary branches should be formed 18 to 20 inches above the ground
- The natural branching of citrus usually results in a nicely shaped tree

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Irrigation

- Supplemental irrigation is necessary when establishing plants
- Give adequate water during flowering and fruit set
- Irrigate during dry times of year
- Drip irrigation is better than overhead sprinklers

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Fertilization

- Soil Test - pH 6.0 to 7.0
- Fertilize the area just beyond the drip line
- Do not fertilize late in the season

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Cold Protection

- If leaves freeze and drop the tree will not produce fruit the following season
- Trees can be covered with a frost blanket
 - Electric light bulbs and heaters placed under the blanket can provide good protection
- Black barrels filled with water positioned close to the tree offer some protection
- On a larger scale high tunnels should be used

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Weed Control

- Do not allow weeds to grow around the root area of the plants
- Mulch
- Weed Mat
- Herbicide

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"SEMI-HARDY" CITRUS

- Semi-hardy citrus is a relative term. From our perspective, this refers to citrus varieties that are hardy to temps in the mid to upper teens to low 20s.
- These make great container specimens

Container Citrus

- Most any variety of citrus can be grown in a large container
- Moved indoors in winter season or occasionally during intermittent cold spells

Insects and Disease

- Red Citrus Mites
- Scale
- Leaf Miner
- Asian Citrus Psyllid
- Citrus Greening

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What size container?

- Eventually a half barrel size container will be needed for larger growing varieties.
- Rollers great aid in moving these pots.
- Soil should be well drained and light to make moving easier.

Protecting

- Occasional severe cold snaps can damage citrus especially to small and newly planted trees. Covering with cloth and even Christmas lights for a little extra heat will always be a benefit.