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## CITRUS PLANTS

Citrus plants in the home make attractive plants due to their lustrous dark green foliage, fragrant blossoms, and bright edible fruit. Flowering usually occurs in late spring through the summer, but often will be throughout the year if grown under good conditions. The fruit ripens slowly, usually over three months and ripe fruit may stay on the plant for several months. In the home, citrus growth requirements are the same.

**LIGHT:** Citrus need at least four hours of direct sun daily to maximize flowering and fruiting. An unobstructed south or west window is an ideal location.

**MOISTURE:** Water thoroughly until water runs out the drainage holes. remove all excess water from the saucer as it may be drawn back into the soil, causing overwatering problems. In order to tell if your plant is dry enough to be watered, it is best to pinch some soil (from as deep in the pot as you can get) between your forefinger and thumb. Squeeze, then let go. If soil clings to your finger, it is moist enough to leave a while longer. If not, water again.

**FERTILIZE:** Citrus are not heavy fertilizer feeders, but do benefit from a high potash, tomato-type fertilizer every three to four months between March and October. They also require an occasional iron supplement to prevent leaf chlorosis (yellowing). This can be done by using an acid based fertilizer.

**PESTS:** Check your plant often for spider mites. They are tiny black, brown, reddish or tan insects that spin very delicate webs on the underside of the leaves. Specks of dust on the webbing may be your first clue to the mites, or you may see yellow mottling on the leaves. Treat with a miticide following the label instructions, three times at five to seven day intervals.  
Scale insects may also attack citrus. They are identified by small dark or light lumps firmly attached to the plant. Their presence can

also be detected by the sticky honeydew they exude. Treat with an insecticide registered for their control, three times at seven to ten day intervals.

Inspect your plants often to catch these potential problems and treat them early when they are the easiest to control.

**SPECIAL  
NOTES:**

Citrus plants are subtropical plants and thus enjoy average to warm temperatures at night. 55-65 degrees Fahrenheit, and warm daytime temperatures, 70-75 degrees Fahrenheit. They also benefit from high humidity. This may be provided by the use of a pebble tray. Fill a deep saucer with pebbles, adding water almost to the top of the pebbles. Place the plant on the pebbles making certain the bottom of the pot is above the water level. The purpose of this is to have water evaporating around the base of the plant to help keep the plant bathed in moist air.