

Fall Citrus Tree Care Tips

by Four Winds Growers

Watering: Adjust your watering schedule as temperatures cool down. Citrus trees need less water in the fall compared to the hot summer months. However, they should still receive consistent moisture. Water deeply and infrequently, allowing the soil to dry slightly between waterings. Be cautious not to overwater, as this can lead to root rot.

Fertilizing: Reduce or stop fertilization in the fall. Fertilizing your citrus tree can promote new growth, which is not ideal as the tree prepares to enter its dormant phase. Avoid high-nitrogen fertilizers, as they can encourage new growth.

Pruning: Fall is a suitable time for light pruning to shape your tree and remove dead or diseased branches. Avoid heavy pruning, as this can stress the tree. Prune with clean, sharp tools and make clean cuts to minimize the risk of disease.

Pest Control: Keep an eye out for pests like aphids, scale insects, and citrus leaf miner. Fall is a good time to inspect your tree and take action if needed. Use natural predators or appropriate treatments to manage pest infestations.

Mulching: For trees planted in the ground, apply a layer of organic mulch around the base of your citrus tree to help conserve moisture, regulate soil temperature, and reduce weed competition. Be sure to keep mulch away from the trunk to prevent rot. Do not mulch citrus trees planted in pots.

Protection from Cold: Depending on your location, fall may bring colder temperatures. Citrus trees are sensitive to frost and cold weather. When temperatures are expected to drop below freezing, consider using frost blankets, cloths, or even holiday string lights to provide some protection. You should also move potted citrus trees indoors or into a greenhouse during extreme cold spells.

Harvesting: Continue to harvest ripe fruit from your citrus tree. Leaving overripe or rotting fruit on the tree can attract pests and diseases. Harvesting also helps reduce the overall stress on the tree.

Disease Prevention: Keep an eye out for signs of disease, such as yellowing leaves or mold growth. If you notice any issues, address them promptly. Good sanitation practices, including removing fallen leaves and fruit, can help prevent disease.