

Q: My Meyer Lemon tree is not bearing. It is several years old. How can I get it to fruit?

A: Meyer lemon trees are pretty evergreen trees in their own right, but the reason most folks grow them is for the fruit. The variety sold most often is the 'Improved Meyer,' with glossy green foliage and fragrant white-pink blooms. Citrus trees begin bearing when they are around four years old, and if your tree is younger, that may be the issue. Lemon trees also require 8 or more hours of direct sunlight a day for good fruit production. This is difficult to provide in many of our gardens, but try to maximize the amount of light the tree receives through pruning of larger surrounding trees or replanting in a bright, unshaded area of your yard.

Lemon trees need slightly acidic soils, preferring a pH of 6-7. If your tree is planted in the ground, check the soil pH and see if it needs to be lowered. They also need soils that drain well. Check the point where the tree enters the soil (the crown). This part of the tree needs to be above the soil line. If the tree has been planted too deeply, suckers from the root can overgrow the cultivar grafted on top. If the tree grows rapidly with no blossoms and big thorns, the rootstock may have overwhelmed the Meyer lemon.

Citrus trees need regular fertilizing. There are many good Citrus fertilizers on the market; be sure to follow directions. Start your fertilizing regime in mid-spring and fertilize according to product directions until mid-fall.

Citrus trees also need regular watering. Depending on your soil, you will want to keep the tree moist but not soggy. Heavy clay soils will need less frequent watering than loams, and Citrus in containers may need daily watering during hot summer months. If the tree has dried out the blossoms may have aborted.

#### Quick Check List

- Amount of light
- Soil pH
- Planting depth
- Fertilizing
- Watering