

4-H Citrus Tree Project

Transplanting Your Tree

The first step in your Citrus Tree Project will be to transplant the young tree from its bag into the 5 gallon pot that will be its home for at least the next 12 months. It is important to be sure you perform this task correctly. Before undertaking the transplanting, you must have something to place in the pot with your tree. The growing medium you select will be very important for it will support the tree for the next year. You have several different options to investigate before selecting a medium. Remember, you must use the 5 gallon pot provided. Do not transplant into a bigger pot before the contest.

Since citrus grows nicely in sand, you may want to simply use porous sand in the container. This medium will require lots of water and frequent applications of fertilizer. It probably is not the best choice, but can be satisfactory.

The other choice for a medium is an artificial soil that is called a potting media. There are many components that can be used to make a potting media. Citrus needs a mix that is well drained. You can buy potting media that is already mixed for you. These are sold at a number of places as potting soil. They are not all the same. The less expensive ones usually are made with Florida peat and Styrofoam beads. The more expensive ones usually contain Canadian peat, two or three other materials such as Perlite or pine bark, fertilizer to get the plant off to a good start, and dolomite to make sure the medium is not too acid. If you buy a prepared mix be sure to get one that is well drained, has a pH somewhere between 5.5 - 7.5 (6.0 - 6.5 is best), and has starter fertilizer incorporated (including minor elements).

You may want to make your own mix:

There are many possible combinations of materials that can be used. You will want to have your mix well drained, with the best pH and starter fertilizer as well. There is not a single mix that is best, many will work fine. Just one example is as follows. 2 parts Canadian peat ** 1 part Perlite ** 1 part Vermiculite ** to this add 6 tablespoons Dolomite & 5 tablespoons controlled release fertilizer, such as Osmocote, per 5 gal of mix.

http://cfextension.ifas.ufl.edu/4h/4h_tree.shtml for project books, care of citrus, transplanting, workshop dates, etc.

Once you have your growing medium ready, you can proceed with the transplanting of the tree. There are several items you need to be aware of when transplanting. First, be sure the tree is planted at the same depth in the pot that is in the bag. You can even have it a little higher in the pot; this means no medium above the soil line on your tree. You may have to remove some roots off the bottom portion of the tree so it can fit in the pot. Next be sure the tree roots are spread out in the container. If you see roots that are wrapping around the plastic bag, you will need to straighten them out in the 5 gallon container. If you do not have roots that need to be straightened, then you can plant the tree without disturbing the roots. Lastly, be sure to firmly pack the medium around your tree, but do not over do this operation. Remember you want a well drained medium, not a compact one.

“ Good Luck with your Project ”

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