

By DLC Resources, Inc.

# Citrus Fertilization



## Fertilize Your Citrus Trees on the Holidays: Valentines Day - Memorial Day - Labor Day

### Citrus Fertilization 101

Citrus trees need three primary nutrients: NITROGEN - PHOSPHORUS - POTASSIUM. Phosphorus and Potassium, along with a multitude of other micro-nutrients, are in most cases sufficiently provided by the soil; however, nitrogen needs to be applied regularly.

Any kind of citrus fertilizer will provide your trees with the right nutrients, but any fertilizer with a high percentage of nitrogen will suffice. Fertilizers are labeled with the percentage of Nitrogen (N), Phosphorus (P), and Potassium (K) they contain. For example a 20-10-10 fertilizer has 20% Nitrogen, 10% Phosphorus and 10% Potassium.

When shopping for fertilizer make sure you are getting the best value for your money by purchasing the highest amount of nitrogen per dollar. If you have the choice of purchasing a 10 pound bag of 20-10-10 for \$9.95 or a 10 pound bag of 12-5-8 for \$8.95 the higher priced bag is a better value.

### How Much Nitrogen?

You will also need to calculate the amount of actual nitrogen you will need to feed your citrus

tree. To find the actual amount of nitrogen in a bag of fertilizer multiply the weight of the bag by the percentage of nitrogen. In a 20 pound bag of 12-5-8 you have 2.4 pounds of actual Nitrogen ( $20 \times 0.12 = 2.4$ ).

Citrus trees require an increasing amount of nitrogen as they mature. Use the following table as a guide.

Citrus Tree Age (years)	Total Annual Nitrogen Application
1	1/8 pound
2	1/4 pound
3	1/2 pound
4	3/4 pound
5+	1 pound

Actual Nitrogen should be applied in 2-3 doses throughout the year.


### When Do I Fertilize?

The best time to apply fertilizer to citrus trees is just before they bloom, typically in January or February. You don't want to give them their total annual nitrogen requirements at one time though. A good rule of thumb is to fertilize on the holidays - Valentines Day (mid February), Memorial Day (end of May) and Labor Day

### Nutrients

It's not easy keeping your citrus happy! It is very important for citrus trees to receive the right amount and the right kind of nutrients. Nutrient deficiencies can cause discoloration in leaves and adversely impact the taste of the fruit. On the other hand, over fertilizing can burn your citrus trees and drastically alter the pH of the soil. If your citrus is unhealthy or problematic it may be a good idea to get your soil tested.

The Arizona Cooperative Extension can refer you to the closest lab - [www.ag.arizona.edu/maricopa/garden/](http://www.ag.arizona.edu/maricopa/garden/).



(beginning of September). This way they receive a constant supply of nitrogen when they first start to bloom, just before the heat and just after the heat.

