



Pruning Citrus Trees

By Kay Di Verde

Citrus trees usually need little pruning except to remove dead or weak branches and to thin twiggy growth. It is possible to rejuvenate an older, established citrus tree.

Before starting to prune the trees, however, first assess its problems. Has the tree been properly cared for, and will pruning solve the problem? It is possible the problem may be disease, insects, little or no light reaching the interior, etc.

If you determine pruning is the solution, be assured that citrus trees usually respond well to hard pruning, when necessary. Start by removing dead, injured, diseased and crossing branches, suckers and branches growing downward. At the next pruning, remove weak branches and overcrowded growth. Never remove more than one-fourth of the tree at one time. Keep in mind that, most citrus trees have a limited supply of carbohydrates in their stem tissues. Excessive pruning at one time may set back growth and fruiting.

After the tree is back in good shape (it may take a couple of years), continue to thin as needed. You can also cut back long branches at the tips to promote shoots nearer the center of the tree. If more than one shoot arises around a cut, choose the one or two best placed shoots to develop as the main branches.