



Celebrating 21 Years!

ask the landscape professional  
Linda K. Lillie of Sprigs & Twigs

Welcome to my weekly series!

Feel free to send me questions you'd like to have me answer and I will do my best to address the ones of most general interest.

EMAIL OR MAIL YOUR QUESTIONS TO:  
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Thank you Readers for Voting Sprigs & Twigs Best Landscape Company and Best Tree Service Every Year!  
Give us a call if we can be of service!

**QUESTION THIS WEEK:**

**Hello Linda - I have a one year old indoor lemon tree that has blossomed 3 times and now has 2 lemons on it and they are growing slowly. How do I care for this plant regarding temperature, fertilizing and all around care? It now has some new growth which is encouraging. Thanks...Linda**

**Linda's Answer:**

Hi Linda,  
Growing indoor citrus trees can be a challenge in this part of the country. Citrus trees are tropical plants that have very specific requirements to live happily. Here are a few tips.

- 1) Make sure your tree is properly fertilized and pollinated, especially if you want the citrus tree to flower and set fruit. About every six weeks during the active growing season (April through September), use a fertilizer made for acid-loving plants at half the recommended strength. If your plant does develop flowers, they may not develop fully into fruit due to lack of pollination. To help with pollination, gently brush the pollen with a cotton swab or artist paintbrush and distribute it from flower to flower to encourage fruiting. Also, moving the plant outdoors to a sunny, protected area will stimulate flowering. Successful pollination eventually produces fruit. Don't be surprised if some of the smaller, young fruit drop off shortly after formation because of ineffective pollination or less than optimum environmental conditions.
- 2) Ensure that your soil has a pH range between 5 and 8 so the roots will take up the nutrients provided by the fertilizer. Also make sure your soil has lots of organic material - a mix of one-third sterile potting soil, one-third peat and one-third organic matter (leaf mold or compost) works well. Any type of planting pot will do, but add a 1" - 2" layer of gravel at the bottom of the pot to promote good drainage.
- 3) Make sure that your tree gets lots of sunlight, i.e., a minimum of 5 hours of sunlight per day and in order to produce fruit, they should get 10-12 hours of direct sunlight per day. Supplemental lighting can be used to extend the day length. Citrus trees grow best indoors at 65 degrees F. during the day and at 50-60 degrees at night.
- 4) Ensure that the humidity in the area of the tree is 45-50% which may mean that you will need to run a humidifier during the winter. Placing the tree on a tray of pebbles filled with water will also help.
- 5) You will need to water regularly. When the top 2 inches of soil are dry, water (but don't soak) the tree. During warm summer months, you may need to water as often as twice a day. During winter months, water much more sparingly, just enough to keep the soil from drying out completely. If you water too much you may get leaf drop or root rot.



Good Luck

Linda K. Lillie has been President of Sprigs & Twigs, Inc. for the last 22 years. She is a graduate of Connecticut College in Botany, an accredited NOFA Organic Land Care Professional, a Connecticut Master Gardener and a national award winning landscape designer for her design and installation projects.

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