

# CITRUS TREES

## Dwarf vs Standard

Many gardeners and homeowners enjoy the beauty and fruit that citrus trees provide. When selecting what kind to plant, special consideration may need to be given to factors such as space available, type and quantity of fruit desired, and HOA or other restrictions.

Dwarf citrus trees are the best for pots or where space is limited; they are usually 25% to 50% smaller than the same variety in a standard size although it should be noted that the amount of dwarfing is not always predictable due to a variety of factors. Fruit on a dwarf tree is the same size as on a standard size tree. However, there will be less fruit produced. This may be an advantage or disadvantage depending on your personal circumstance. Dwarfs can be easier to harvest and maintain due to the smaller size, and they have more the appearance of a shrub than a tree.



Dwarf citrus tree



Standard sized trees are usually between 12 and 20 feet tall depending on variety and conditions, with sweet orange trees being about mid-size within the range. Although the natural growth habit of citrus trees would make them look like a large shrub with branches growing down to the ground, many people prefer to prune them up more like trees, adding landscape value to the yard. Standard size trees have a higher fruit yield but the fruit might also be harder to harvest at the top of the tree.

Differentiating a dwarf from a young standard tree can usually be done by observing the growth habit. A dwarf will tend to have a somewhat compact habit with a thicker trunk in relation to the height. A standard will have a skinnier trunk at the same height with a looser, wispy appearance.

Excess fruit left on the ground or on the tree can be a food source for pests such as roof rats. Remove fruit from the ground and pick all fruit from the tree at the end of the season to help prevent pests. To prevent rats from entering any part of your home, seal all holes that may pose a possible entry. Trees that are in contact with the upper portions of the home can make an easy pathway from the ground to the house. Prune plant material away from the home as a preventative measure.

**Source:** CITRUS Complete Guide To Selecting & Growing More Than 100 Varieties For California, Arizona, Texas, The Gulf Coast, Florida by Lance Walheim

