



Topic: When to Remove Citrus from Tree

Question: Can you leave citrus fruits on the tree after maturity. I believe you once said that grapefruits only get sweeter over time if left on the tree. Does this also apply to oranges, tangerines, and lemons? I had heard that you should pick your fruits at the end of each season.

Dwayne, email

Answer: Citrus fruits accumulate sugar and loose acidity with time. However, after maturity the consequence of the process differs with different citrus varieties. Many orange variety kept on the tree beyond maturity may develop a “flat” taste with much sugar and practically no acid. The taste is also called insipid.

Many tangerines and Navel oranges lose their juice content immediately after maturity and develop a disorder called granulation. Limes and lemons kept on trees after their peak will lose their juice content and start to decline but at a slower rate than fruits of other citrus varieties.

Valencia orange on the other hand mature in March and can remain on the tree into July becoming sweeter with time. Most grapefruits mature and are ready to be picked by October. However, instead of drying out and declining in flavor, they will continue to improve in quality by accumulating sugar and losing bitterness. These fruits can be kept on the trees months after maturity often through May of the following year.

Useful Links

[Sooty Mold and Rust Mites](#)

[Citrus Pollenizers](#)

[Stephen's Webpage](#)

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