



## CARE INSTRUCTIONS

### CITRUS AND GARDENIA

The ideal environment for citrus and gardenia house plants includes bright sunlight for at least half the day, high humidity, acidic soil/fertilizer, and cool (55 F - 65 F) night temperature.

#### FERTILIZER:

In general, use acidic fertilizers similar to those used for azaleas. We suggest a slow release every 3 - 4 months; or a liquid dissolving type every 1 - 2 weeks in summer and 1x a month in the winter.

For citrus, it's a good idea to use an organic, non-chemical option if you plan to eat the fruit.

#### TO ENCOURAGE GARDENIA BLOOMS:

Mix a fertilizer like Miracid fertilizer at 1/3 or less strength in a mister bottle and mist your leaves in periods of no rain. To avoid leaf burn, do this early morning or evening when the plant is not in direct sun.

#### TO ENCOURAGE CITRUS FRUIT:

Fertilize regularly in the spring when growth is active (April - September). Pollinate by hand (with cotton swab from flower to flower), or offer access to pollinators outside in summertime. Fruiting will most likely occur in our winter season and their development takes 3+ weeks to ripen.

#### WATER:

With each watering; soak the entire soil ball of the plant. Allow for a full drainage, avoiding water collection at the base of your pot. Between waterings, the top 1"-2" of soil surface should be dry to the touch. **Outdoors**, water both foliage and soil daily in the heat of summer. In fall and spring, water every 2 - 4 days minus long periods of rain. **Indoors**, during winter, water every 5 - 7 days, misting foliage daily.

During winter, watering gets cut in half.

#### HUMIDITY:

High humidity is ideal. Create humidity by...

- 1) misting/showering the foliage daily,
- 2) placing a well-draining saucer of rocks or pot risers under the pot. Allow for space between the base of the pot and the collection of water, or
- 3) run a humidifier or vaporizer inside near your plant



## **SUNLIGHT VS. TEMPERATURE:**

Place your plants in a spot with 5 - 6 hrs of direct sun in the summer and 8 - 10 hrs in the winter. Give them supplemental lighting using LED Plant Grow Lights (available at most box stores like Lowe's, Home Depot, or online), for extra light in winter. Do not use "plant lights," which are usually just incandescent bulbs that will not benefit your plant(s)..

If not in a greenhouse, bring your plant inside during winter. Keep temperatures consistent; in a range of 55 F - 65 F.

When bringing plants in for winter, avoid shocking the plant. Incrementally decrease the amount of light they get. Over the span of 3 weeks before bringing it indoors, transition your plant from direct sun, to part and then to shade. Do the opposite when working up to springtime when you're about to bring them back outdoors. If this transition isn't made, your plant may go into shock and lose all of its leaves and will need time to regrow all its leaves again. The shock usually results in less blooming and fruiting.

## **SOIL:**

Both citrus and gardenias like well-draining, aerated soil. Typical potting soils are neutral and not ideal for gardenias, as they need an acidic mix. Mix your own potting soil (not dirt) with peat moss, perlite and vermiculite, or take an easy route and grab a bag of our homemade gardenia soil the next time you're at our greenhouse.

## **REPOTTING:**

Wait to repot your plant until it is completely rootbound, difficult to keep watered in summertime, or has become top-heavy (falling over easily). Root-prune to use the same pot. We can provide this service for you, if you'd prefer.

## **PEST CONTROL:**

Citrus is pretty pest resilient, however scale is the most frequent pest and can be removed by hand or with something organic such as neem oil.

With gardenias, thrips and aphids are common pests. They can be treated by removing the pests on the surface of the plant with insecticidal soap or horticultural oil in 3 applications of incremental spraying for periods of 5 - 7 days each time.