

Growing Citrus in the Home Landscape

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service — Galveston County Office



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PHOTO CREDIT: William M. Johnson

Whether you are an enthusiastic citrus grower or just interested in tasting an array of locally grown citrus fruit, plan to attend the 2019 Upper Gulf Coast Citrus Tasting & Seminar on Thursday, Dec. 5.

When you think of citrus, images of grapefruits, lemons, limes, oranges are most likely to come to mind. It's unfortunate that the citrus you see in the supermarket represents a very small portion of the variety of citrus that can be grown locally.

I grew up in Virginia and my parents traditionally

ordered two boxes of citrus for consumption by the family over the Christmas Holiday season—there was one large box of oranges and another large box of grapefruits.

Fast forward to the present and my Christmas Holidays in Texas still have a citrus presence with two important exceptions: 1) I

now get to experience many more types of citrus and 2) all my Holiday citrus are homegrown thanks to many of my friends who grow citrus and the three rather productive citrus plants in my backyard.

My Meiwa kumquat tree has produced another respectable harvest of



citrus this fall. I fertilized it well this year and I was expecting a good harvest this fall. The tree set multiple flushes of blooms over the year and every branch is now drooping because of the abundance of bright tiny orange fruits. Even though I started harvesting the small (quarter-size) fruits in mid-November, the remaining fruit will continue to ripen over the next several weeks. Meiwa kumquat trees are also very ornamental—the tree looks like I have a decorated Christmas tree in my landscape.

Many types of citrus are easier to grow than many "traditional" fruit trees such as peaches. Many residents grow citrus not only for the fruit but also for the ornamental value that trees provide to the landscape.

Now visualize one of several types of citrus trees that you can grow in your yard to produce home-grown fruit to give as a distinctive and personal gift to family, neighbors and other friends. Sound too good to be true? Are you interested in sample-tasting an array of locally grown citrus fruit? Are you interested in learning about the basics of growing your own citrus?

Whether you are an enthusiastic citrus grower or just interested in tasting an array of locally grown citrus fruit, plan to attend the 2019 Upper Gulf Coast Citrus Tasting & Seminar Program on Thursday, December 5, from 6:00 – 8:30 p.m. The program will be conducted at the Galveston County AgriLife Ex-

tension Office located in Carbide Park at 4102-B Main Street (FM 519) in La Marque.

Citrus grown by local gardeners will be available for taste-testing starting at 6:00 p.m. At 6:30 p.m., Monte Nesbitt, Texas A&M Extension Specialist in the Department of Horticultural Sciences at College Station, will provide a PowerPoint presentation entitled "Growing Citrus on the Gulf Coast." Several varieties of citrus trees will also be available for sale during the taste testing.

Upcoming Seminars

Growing Tomato Transplants from Seed: 9:00 - 11:30 a.m., Saturday, December 7. Learn about the secrets of growing tomatoes from seeds by Master Gardener Ira Gervais who has considerable experience and expertise in growing tomatoes.

Two questions will likely come to mind on this topic: Isn't this an odd time of the year to be thinking about growing tomatoes? And, what can be gained from growing tomatoes from seed when I can just buy the transplants from a garden center?

You can select varieties not commonly available at garden centers including heirloom varieties. In addition, you increase the likelihood of having transplants that are disease and insect free.

Other topics to be discussed include the best performing tomato

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varieties for our growing area, where to obtain seeds, planting and growing techniques, and insect and disease control.

Citrus Seminar & Tasting: 6:00 – 8:30 p.m., Thursday, December 5. Monte Nesbitt, Texas A&M Extension Specialist, will present this program covering such topics as proper fertilization, rootstock, variety selection, establishment, production, cultural practices, diseases, and insect pest problems. Tasting will begin at 6:00 p.m., and the presentation will start at 6:30 p.m.

All programs will be conducted at the Galveston County AgriLife Extension Office located in Carbide Park (4102-B Main St., La Marque). Pre-registration required (phone 281-309-5065 or e-mail galvcountymgs@gmail.com) to ensure adequate availability of seminar handouts.

