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After attending a lecture by a gardening author who has grown Meyer lemons (*Citrus × meyeri*) on her Cape Cod deck for years, I was determined to do the same on my deck in sunnier southeastern Pennsylvania.

My experiment started with a four-foot grafted tree purchased online last April. It started blooming in three weeks and by August baby lemons were forming.

The lemons were still green in October when the tree came inside for the winter, along with my low expectations that I'd ever harvest a real lemon.

To my surprise, the fruit didn't fall off, but instead grew and turned yellow and sweet. I was rewarded after ten months with three perfect Meyer lemons.

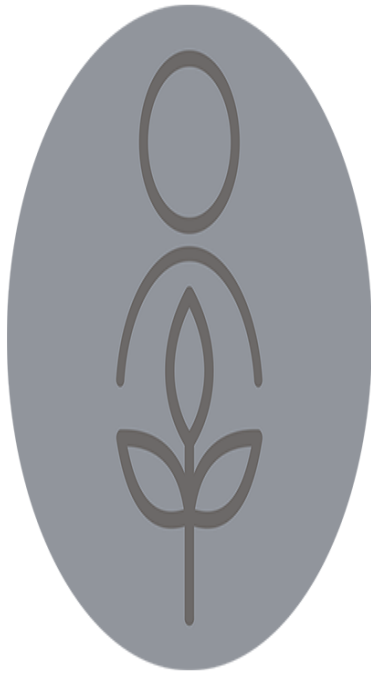


Photo credit: Laura Nicholas

If you enjoy container gardening, you will love having a Meyer lemon tree. Here are a few things that may help you be successful:

- Meyer lemons are cold hardy to 22°F, so they need to spend the winter inside. Bring it into the house gradually, as sudden temperature changes can result in fruit drop. A sunny south-facing window is best. Meyer lemon trees like 6 hours of sun a day.
- The trees are self-pollinating so you only need one to produce fruit. They are pollinated by insects, so you will need to do the job when the tree is indoors by gently brushing the blossoms with a small soft paintbrush.
- Buy a grafted tree from reputable vendor or garden center. I purchased a four-foot tree online.

- Use a large pot with well-draining potting mix. Fertilize during the active growing season with a high-nitrogen fertilizer. I used a 2-1-1 fertilizer specially formulated for citrus trees (acid-loving plants).
- Don't let tree dry out completely. Once inside, use a humidifier or spritz with water, as they love humidity.
- Don't panic when baby lemons start falling off. At least 50 baby lemons fell off before I got the clump of three to hang on.
- Enjoy the incredible jasmine-like fragrance of the blossoms. It will fill your deck and house with an amazing scent. The tree blooms **all** year.
- Be **patient!** It takes six to nine months for a lemon to fully ripen. But it's well worth the wait!