

Propagating Lemon Trees from Seeds at Home

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I am an old fan of garbage gardening and since living in the RV full time I have taken up drinking more tea than I do coffee. Over a period of time my desires of my body tend to change and to be honest with you, I have no idea why. Anyway, in combining my garbage gardening skills with my current tea drinking I decided to plant the seeds from the lemons that I add to my hot tea.

It would be a simple task to get on the internet a Google search on lemon trees in order to satisfy my propagation goals however that would eliminate the challenge of growing plants from scrapes. Many people fail to understand that you can readily harvest the seeds from your vegetables and fruits that you eat even citrus fruits such as limes and lemons. I am often asked by friends and relatives if they can grow lemon trees from the seed they have and my answer is absolutely you can and surprisingly the process is so simple and easy that even a grade school child can do it. In fact, this makes an excellent project for school age children to introduce them to botany and plant propagation. The downfall of growing your own lemon trees is that you must develop a good measure of patience and accept the possibility that your plant may not provide you with the exact type of lemons that you obtained the seeds from.

Commercial citrus trees are generally grafted to a parent tree and the fruits are identical to the donor trees, additionally they will often set fruit within two years. Our garbage lemon trees will likely not be carbon copies of the parents and will often take as long as five years or more to bear fruit. I must be honest with you however, my father in law grew some and had it had small fruit on it within a two year period. So there are many factors which affect the lemon trees and it is difficult to tell when you will have successful fruit on the tree. Keep in mind that the results of your trees may be inferior to those that you purchase but it is basically the challenge and fun of growing it that fascinates many people and in the end you have an attractive living tree to display in your living room or office.

To start your lemon trees, you must first collect some seeds from your favorite tasty lemons. As you slice and use the seeds make sure to remove any pulp from them and rinse them well in fresh water to remove clinging flesh that will often fosters various plant diseases. You should use fresh lemon seeds and be sure to plant them quickly. Never let the seeds dry out or you will reduce your chances of growing a successful tree. Fill a small Dixie cup with a quality soil mix or make your own by combining half peat moss with half perlite. Plant several seeds in each of the Dixie cups at a depth of one-half inch deep and dampen the soil lightly but do not over water it. Cover the Dixie cup with Ziploc baggie to retain the water. Always maintain moist soil in the cup but avoid making

it soggy. You should keep the temperature of your growing lemon tree seeds at about 70 degrees F.

I usually take my seeds and immediately place them into a small Dixie cup. I will next place the dampened cup into a Ziploc bag to provide it with a greenhouse type atmosphere. I then sit it in a dark warm location. When the seedlings start to emerge from the soil, I will take and place the cup onto a window ceil where it can obtain some sunshine and a bit of brighter light. You should remove the plastic Ziploc at this time. When your lemon seedlings have developed several sets of true leaves it is time to transplant them to a 4 to 6 inch pot filled with a quality potting mix. Fertilize your young trees every two weeks with a water soluble fertilizer which is high in potassium and always keep its soil moist.

On the subject of light, make certain that your lemon seedlings receive at least four hours of direct sunlight daily with temperatures ranging between 60 to 70 degrees F. While this tree is growing you may wish to prune it in the early spring and if necessary repot it to encourage the development of new growth and future fruiting. With the approach of winter you should stop fertilizing and reduce the amount of water provided the plant. Be sure to keep it in a draft free location during these winter months.

That is all there is to it from seed to tree in a few simple steps. You have nothing to lose and who knows you might end up with a fruit tree or at the least a beautiful house plant that is sure to strike up conversations from your guests.

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