
Citrus Planting Management

1 Introduction to Planting Management

Learner Guide



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Additional information sources:

Citrus Production Guidelines: Volume I – Citriculture: Establishment, *Citrus Research International*

Cultivar Fact Sheet, *Citrus Research International*

Citrus Academy production learning material:

Enterprise Selection and Establishment

Orchard Establishment

Propagation

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Introduction

definition

Planting Management

Planting management means planning and planting new citrus orchards, and maintaining records of individual orchards over their lifespans to assist with managing them in the best possible way. If done well, planting management contributes to the long-term profitability of your whole farm.

Planting new orchards is the most important part of establishing a new citrus production unit. It is often also the biggest capital investment a citrus grower makes, and from where the grower has to generate the returns on this investment.

If the citrus cultivar is not right; or if the orchard is not laid out well; or if preparation is not done well; or if trees are sub-standard; or if trees are not planted properly and looked after while they are young, it can mean that the orchard never reaches its full yield potential in terms of volume, or quality, or both. It can also mean that production practices will have to be changed to compensate, which can increase costs. It can make it more difficult to market fruit, or get decent prices. It can even mean that the orchard's lifespan will be shortened.

summary

Planting management involves:

- Selecting the optimal citrus type and cultivar
- Planning and laying out the new planting
- Preparing for establishing the trees
- Planting them and taking care of them while they are still young, and
- Keeping record of everything to do with the orchard for as long as it is in production.

Citrus Cultivars and Rootstocks

Today's citrus grower has an almost staggering choice of citrus cultivars and rootstocks. There are a myriad factors that play a role in this choice, and it is important to understand them and their significance. Once the choice has been made, trees are ordered from a citrus nursery, as long as two years before the orchard is eventually planted.

Orchard Layout and Planning

The next step is to plan the layout of the citrus planting.

- ❖ Where will the orchard be?
- ❖ What about the topography of the land?

- ❖ What do we need to know about the natural resources?
- ❖ What planting density must be used?
- ❖ How do we lay it out to limit its environmental impact?
- ❖ What about infrastructure?

Orchard Establishment

How long in advance physical preparation for the planting starts, depends on factors such as soil preparation and infrastructure.

At last the time will come for the trees to be planted, after which they must be cared for to make sure that they grow fast and well, and come into production in the shortest possible time.

Orchard Recordkeeping

Orchards have a commercial lifespan of eighteen to thirty years. If planting management was done properly, good volumes of marketable fruit will be produced as long as sound production practices are employed.

But can we simply assume that there will always be the same number of trees as the day it was planted? And how is the performance of the orchard monitored? We need proper records – after all, you cannot manage what you do not measure.

Conclusion

In farming there are always factors that cannot be controlled by the grower. This makes factors that can be controlled even more critical. Good planting management is such a factor, and can have a significant impact on the success of a citrus farm.