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# SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY

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SECRETS

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**“What has your experience been growing fruit trees?”**

After becoming disgusted with peach quality even from the farmer's markets (pre-Tenerelli Orchards days), a few years ago I decided to grow my own. I bought a Dave Wilson 4-in-1, with 'Desert Gold', 'May Pride', 'Eva's Pride' and 'Mid Pride'. The first year the squirrels got two peaches, I got two.

The next year I didn't thin enough and the weight broke the 'Desert Gold', which never grew back. I got excellent fruit from the other three varieties. But the 'May Pride', which ripens late May-June, ripened just as I was about to go out of town.

In the meantime the 'May Pride' and the 'Mid Pride' have outgrown the 'Eva's Pride' which has more or less withered away. Plus the last two springs have been cold so the 'May Pride' has been lousy, so I decided to cut that one off the tree entirely. So I'm left with 'Mid Pride' and will determine its fate after this year's harvest. Tom Spellman's talk inspired me to start over and try again. - *KM*

Bears lime and Meyer lemon in 24-inch wide clay pots get manure from my chickens. Ten years on, the lime is getting a little root bound but I get heavy crops all year 'round. Very important to use water spray from a trigger nozzle every two weeks to keep down white fly and spider mites. - *SR*

I have the best fed squirrels in Southern California. - *SG*

Dwarf citrus in containers; pineapple guava in the ground. Feed citrus with Dr. Earth; compost only for the guava. - *DC*

My Mutsu apple tree is my favorite of all of my fruit trees. I do get way too many but have a one-month period where they ripen and I have made everything from cider to apple butter, apple breads and pie and jarred apple chutney. - *Anonymous*

Except for a few new plantings, our citrus trees are all 40-50 years old. Most are from Four Winds Nursery on dwarfing rootstock. After all these years, I would say that the rootstock prevented the formation of a trunk, but the plants generally look like full sized trees, branching at ground level.

The trees are pruned fairly regularly, every 1-3 years, but seem to top out at 12-15 feet. We live in Reseda. Our soil is adobe, and in good years the trees get watered once a month in summer. They have probably been fed twice in all the years we have grown them.

Several trees died from gummosis, which convinced us to slow down drastically on the watering. One tree, a Samson tangelo, survived the gummosis. Rain water is all it lives on. It also has a bad case of scale. However, it usually produces a huge crop of delicious fruit every January to February.

We currently grow about 19 varieties of citrus with a couple of duplicates. We also have 2 Hachiya persimmons and a Fuyu persimmon that get no supplemental water. They generally produce large crops, though this year the Fuyu was almost bare, possibly because the frost last January came at a bad time. We have also grown plums, apricots, peaches, loquats and figs. The only one I miss is the fig. But I don't miss the squished fruit and the beetles.

In another garden, in sandy soil, I have 3 more persimmons and a Japanese pear ('20th Century'). The persimmons get no summer water. The pear seems to need more regular watering and gets watered about every 3 weeks. It was planted in 2001 and produced its first big crop this year. I also had a Mahon pecan tree. It grew to 30 feet in less than 15 years, with regular pruning. Squirrels and crows got all the nuts and the garden got too much shade. The roots resprouted for about 6 years after the tree was removed but were finally vanquished by Roundup. - JC