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**Having problems with your fruit harvest? Check out these common questions that appear regularly in my inbox.**



### Scabby Fruit

*My passionfruit grows and bears prolifically, but lately some of the fruit have developed scabs and look really terrible.*

Scab disease on passionfruit is common in cool, wet conditions and where air circulation around plants is poor. Thin the vine out to allow better air movement and expose more of the foliage and fruit to sunlight. Prune adjacent or overhanging trees and shrubs and avoid overhead watering of the passionfruit vine. Spraying with a copper-based spray can help, but only if you also take the previously recommended action.

### Bumper Crops

*We had a bumper crops of mango fruit last year – the first decent crop in eight years! How can I repeat this success every year?*

While mangoes trees grow brilliantly in Brisbane and surrounding areas, the climate

is marginal for fruit production. When the westerly winds are not too severe; winter temperatures are mild and the spring and early summer are dry, you can almost guarantee a bumper harvest. When the winter is cold and the spring is wet or windy, diseases like anthracnose and black spot are more prevalent. Under these conditions it is difficult to achieve a decent harvest no matter what pruning, fertilizing or spraying you undertake.



### Sour Mandarins

*My mandarins were sour-tasting this year. The fruit has previously been sweet. What have I done wrong?*

All citrus trees have a high requirement for nutrients, especially trace elements. Water a trace element mix like BioTrace, in addition to your seasonal application of fertilizer. If you have been using a citrus and fruit tree fertilizer on a regular basis, ensure you are applying the quantity recommended and be sure to water in well. Dry trees often bear fruit with no sweetness. Apply compost and mulch to the root area and water deeply every fortnight,

particularly from flowering to fruit harvest. Nutrition you provide in the months prior to flowering has a strong influence on the quality of your crop.

### Transplant Time



I have a Lot's A Lemons growing in a pot, but would like to transplant it into the garden. What is the best time to transplant?

Lot's A Lemons is a cutting grown variety. It is best left in a pot as cutting grown citrus are more susceptible to developing root rot if planted out into the garden. Grafted lemons can be planted from pots into the garden. This is best done during the cooler months of the year or in spring when cooler temperatures reduce transplant stress.

### Underplanting Fruit Trees

Can I plant herbs under my fruit trees? I would love to have some basil and parsley to harvest.

It is best to avoid digging around the roots of established fruit trees. This can encourage the roots or rootstock to sucker. Root

competition and the shade created by fruit trees means most herbs do not tend to grow very well. Tougher herbs like oregano and thyme may survive beyond the immediate drip line of the foliage. Grow basil and parsley with your vegetables as they like similar conditions to lettuce.

### Black Soot

*My citrus foliage is covered in what looks like black soot. I sprayed the leaves with an oil, but the black soot came back.*

This black soot is called sooty mould. It grows on the sticky, sweet honey-dew secreted by sucking insects such as scale and aphids. Spraying once rarely controls the problem as



it is hard to kill every insect pest in just one treatment. Spray citrus trees (and anything else showing signs of sooty mould) with a plant-based soil spray three times at two week intervals. Spray both sides of the leaves as well as the trunk and branches. Check the trees again in a few months' time and repeat the sprays if necessary.