



Red-Flesh Grapefruit

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Site Selection: Select a well-drained site, avoid low lying areas and mound if necessary. Young trees need wind protection.

Site Preparation: Deep rip to break hardpan. Incorporate organic matter. A pre-plant soil test will indicate the required pH adjustment to about 6.5 with Dolomite and the amount of basal fertiliser needed.

Planting: Mound rows with spacings of 4 m between trees and 6m laneways. Ideal time is in March/April, no fertiliser at planting time and mulch to retain water and cool root systems.

Selecting Stock: Buy grafted trees from specialist citrus or fruit tree nurseries. You cannot import citrus trees or budding material from Queensland because of disease issues.

The Importance of Rootstocks: Grafted trees take less time to bear fruit and produce better yields. The tree is smaller, suited to different soil types and is resistant to diseases.

Suggested Rootstocks for Red Fleshed Grapefruit: Henderson on Troyer or Carrizo citrange.

Fertilising:

- **Non-bearing trees** - fertiliser every two months approximately 50-100 g/tree of 14N, 14P, 12K +TE. A minimum of two annual foliar sprays containing zinc, iron, copper and manganese. Foliar sprays should be applied on semi-matured, vegetative flush.
- **Bearing trees annual fertilizer** - Nitrogen at 80-100 g/tree/per year of age, Phosphorus at 10 g/tree/per year of age, Potassium at 40-50 g/tree/per year of age during July-August or after droughting. Apply 100g/m² Dolomite before and after the Wet. A minimum of two annual foliar sprays containing zinc, iron, copper and manganese. Foliar sprays should be applied on semi-matured, vegetative flush.

Irrigation: Water to keep the soil moist but not soggy. Use under tree sprinklers. Monitor irrigation using tensiometers to keep moisture in the root zone. The method of droughting after the Wet Season for 6-8 weeks can improve flowering.

Pruning: When trees are young the most important thing is to get a canopy quickly, so don't over prune but rather shape the tree.

In mature trees remove all dead wood, suckers and "skirt" the lower part of the tree by removing all branches and shoots below a height of 30 cm from the ground.

Pests: Scale insects, mealybug, sooty mould, mites and citrus leaf miner. Visit <http://pestinfo.nt.gov.au/>

Diseases: There are minimal disease problems and most can be avoided by using the correct rootstock and good irrigation practices especially by keeping sprinklers and mulch away from the tree trunk.

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Maturity: Red flesh grapefruit are mature when a pink colour or blush is evident. Use a Brix Acid test to determine sugar to acid ratio to market standards. Fruit can remain on the tree for extended periods of time before any deterioration will occur.

Harvest Time: March/April is the market window available to NT growers.

Post Harvest: Fruit are washed and brushed to remove dirt followed by a fungal dip, an ICA treatment if required, waxed and dried. An ICA treatment is required for all states except Queensland.

Fruit exported to Western Australia requires an ICA treatment and a quarantine inspection.

Fruit needs to be degreened or gassed to achieve full colour.

References:

<http://www.austcitrus.org.au/>

<http://www.dpi.qld.gov.au/thematiclists/1080.html>

<http://www.sardi.sa.gov.au/>