

TREE SPACING

(Excerpted from a paper by Dr. William Castle, University of Florida)

Tree spacing is an important consideration in citrus grove management. The move toward higher density planting is driven by the desire to obtain greater and earlier returns on investment, reduced availability of suitable land, increased land values and taxes, increased expenditures for equipment, irrigation systems, and labor.

A disadvantage of higher density plantings is yield reduction due to overcrowding or shading after the planting has reached containment size. Such yield reduction is a result from delays in hedging and topping for tree size control until trees are well beyond containment size. It is possible to maintain satisfactory yield in higher density plantings with timely pruning practices and efficient fertilizer management. Many variables must be included in making a decision about spacing. Tree vigor and habit as influenced by cultivar and rootstock and soil characteristics including depth to the water table are important.