

Citrus

Citrus (*Rutaceae*)

The Citrus genus includes numerous species of evergreen trees or shrubs, of medium to slow growth, reaching medium (or medium-small) dimensions. They are extremely popular because of the beautiful foliage, often aromatic, the white flowers which are almost always very fragrant and the edible fruit commonly known as "Citrus Fruits". Native to south-east Asia where they were probably grown 4000 years ago. In Tuscany they began to be used as ornamental plants at the time of the Renaissance when they were grown in large terracotta tubs from Impruneta and were an important element in the decoration of the gardens of the Medici family. Today Citrus plants are sold all over Europe despite their vulnerability in cold temperatures which means they can only be grown in open ground in zone 9 and above, in sunny positions. In less suitable climates they can be grown in tubs, usually very ornamental, and are brought outside only during the warm season. During the cold months they must be taken under cover and kept at a temperature between 4°C and 10°C. Citrus plants have a fairly superficial and spreading root system and therefore require moist, not calcareous soil. The thin bark of the branches and foliage are not made for withstanding long periods of drought. It is therefore necessary to give abundant water frequently in summer but in winter once a week or less is sufficient.

aurantium, Bitter Orange

Small tree, sometimes a large shrub, spiny. Glossy green leaves, 10cm. Very fragrant white flowers in March-April. Large orange, bitter fruit which form in autumn and remain on the plant until late spring when at the same time flowers are present. Very popular and decorative for lining avenues.





deliciosa
(C. nobilis) (C. reticulata),
Common Mandarin

Fairly vigorous tree or shrub, round habit and broad crown. Dark green, small, narrow, lanceolate leaves. Small, fragrant, white flowers. The fruit is medium, round, orange and ripens in winter, between November and January.

fortunella "Margarita", Kumquat

Shrub or small tree with ascending branches which bear shiny, green lanceolate leaves. Strongly scented white flowers and oval, golden-yellow fruit which remain on the tree almost all year long. Good house plant.





limon, Common Lemon

Origin: Southern Asia. Without doubt the main species of all citrus fruits, with its generous and ceaseless production of flowers and fruits all year round. Thorny small tree or large shrub, erect, irregular, broad habit. Green or light green ovate leaves 7-10 cm. White perfumed flowers, tinged with pink. Yellow ovoidal fruits, 12-15 cm.

limon "Florentia", Florentin Citron

Cultivated in Tuscany since the days of the Medici. Elipsoidal yellow fruits, more or less long, acid pale yellow, perfumed pulp, very juicy. The plant bears flowers and fruit in nearly every month of the year.





limon "Foliis Variegatis",
Variegated Lemon

Medium-sized, round, juicy fruits. Big leaves with a lot of creamy-white variegation.

Limon "lunaria",
Four Seasons' Lemon

Called "Lunaria" because on its native soil it flowers with the new moon and "Four Seasons" because it bears fruit all year round (elongated, long-necked, juicy, non-acid pulp, few pips).





medica, Citron

This is the first citrus fruit introduced into Europe. Plant with ascending habit, irregular crown and thorny branches. Medium-large leaves, oval, elongate. Abundant flowering in spring, and a second less abundant flowering in autumn. Large or very large fruit, oblong or cylindrical with a very thick, rough, pale yellow skin.

**medica "Digitata",
Buddha's Hand Citron**

Produces most unusual yellow fruits with thick peel, no pulp, top part divided into sections that look like fingers of a hand





mitis (C. madurensis),
Calamondin

Origin: China. Some botanists maintain it is a cross between the mandarin and the kumquat. Compact, fairly vigorous plant, with small leaves. Flowers and fruits almost all year round. Heavily scented flowers; very abundant, small, round fruits are have a thin, sweet skin and sour flesh with few pips. It is the most resistant of all Citrus, to the heat of the apartments, it is therefore a very popular Christmas houseplant.

x paradisi, Grapefruit

Native to Barbados - Antilla, it is the only citrus fruit which does not originate in Asia. Vigorous plant with large, oval leaves. Large, white flowers. Very large fruit, round, smooth and with a bitter taste.



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sinensis, Sweet Orange

Vigorous tree or shrub. The flowers are deliciously fragrant and are followed by large round fruits which turn dark orange in autumn and hang on the plant until spring, thus creating a wonderful contrast with the large dark green leaves.

Myrtifolia, Myrtle Leaf Orange

Small, dark green leaves. Abundant fruit, round and green, pale yellow when ripe, used for making marmalade.

