

# Citrus aurantifolia

*Rutaceae*

Indonesia, India

- Common names: Eng: lime; Swah: mdimu.
- Ecology: All plants in the Citrus group originated in Asia and are now widely grown in the tropics and sub-tropics. Limes probably came from Indonesia or India. In Tanzania citrus trees are planted around homes in most villages but more common in the eastern areas, e.g. Morogoro, the coast and Zanzibar. All citrus prefer well-drained fairly acid soils with high fertility and organic matter. They do not tolerate wind or waterlogging but require rainfall for most of the year. Limes normally grow up to 1,800 m but can grow up to 2,500 m, e.g. in Ethiopia, but they will not grow outside the tropics.
- Uses: Food (fruit), pickle, drink (fruit).
- Description: An evergreen tree to 5 m, foliage not dense, branches with many short, sharp spines. BARK: generally smooth grey-brown, bole always short, less than 1 m to first branch, as all citrus. LEAVES: rather small, 4-8 cm, a narrow wing on the stalk, leaf "jointed" to the blade, edge smooth or round toothed. FLOWERS: 1-7 flowers together beside leaf, each 2 cm across buds and flower white, fragrant. FRUIT: the smallest citrus fruit, usually 4-5 cm across, peel thin green-yellow, difficult to remove, pulp very acid, green, juicy.
- Propagation: Can be grown from seed, grafting.
- Seed info.: Mature fruit and cut up under water to set free seeds  
Germination in 3-4 weeks.
- treatment: not necessary.
- storage: use fresh seed no more than 14 days old.
- Management: Pollarding to encourage horizontal branching (this is done to keep the tree low in order to pick the fruit easily)  
Hand pollination is sometimes necessary to produce good fruit.
- Remarks:

