

Citrus aurantifolia

Rutaceae

Indonesia, India — naturalized

Trade name: Lime.

Common names: **English:** Lime **Luganda:** Nimawa.

Ecology: The lime was introduced to Europe around the thirteenth century and by the Spaniards to the New World early in their colonization. It has since been grown throughout the tropics and is commonly cultivated in Uganda.

Uses: Firewood, food (fruit), medicine (leaves, fruit), citric acid, lime oil.

Description: An evergreen shrub or much-branched tree to 5 m with very many short sharp spines on the stems and beside leaves. **LEAVES:** oval, rather small, shiny green 4-8 cm, the **leaf stalk with a narrow "wing"**, an extra leafy growth and a "joint" with the leaf blade, edge smooth or round-toothed. **FLOWERS:** both **buds and flowers white**, 1-7 flowers in a leaf axil, each about 2 cm across. **FRUIT:** round or oval, to **6 cm diameter**, but usually smaller, **peel very thin, green or yellow, difficult to remove**, pulp green, very **acid** but juicy.

Propagation: Seedlings, grafting.

Seed: Squeeze out seeds from fruit and sow immediately,

treatment: not necessary,

storage: not recommended.

Management: Once established, lime trees require no further management and they are well adapted to local conditions. They are a source of root stock material for budding of other citrus species.

Remarks: A plant that is of economic importance because of its fruit. Limes are extensively used in the tropics for fresh juice and as flavouring for many foods. Important commercial products are lime juice, cordial and marmalade. Lime oil is prepared from the peel and citric acid is made from the fruit. Knowledge of the budding technique should be encouraged through local nurseries.

