

Citrus medica

Rutaceae

South-West Asia

Common names:

Eng: citron; Swah: mfulungu.

Ecology:

A tree brought long ago from Asia to the Middle East and Ethiopia where it is especially valued for its medicinal properties. The skin or peel of the citrus fruit is very variable, some smooth and some rough, some tight and others easily detached. Citron has the most thick and rough peel of all. The peel of many citrus remains green in the tropics as cold nights are needed to change the colour to orange-yellow. Oil glands in the peel contain essential oils which give a characteristic smell to the leaves, flowers and fruit.

Uses:

Food (fruit), medicine (leaves, fruit).

Description:

A small shrub or tree to 3 m, stems reddish with short, thick spines. LEAVES: easily recognized as they are large, long oval and have only a slightly toothed edge, no wing on the stalk and no joint to the leaf blade. FLOWERS: flowers are of two kinds, some losing the central ovary, petals white inside, pink-purple outside so buds look purple. FRUIT: big, oval-oblong 20-30 cm, yellow, skin very bumpy; hollow in centre but most of the inside is thick white spongy tissue, only a small amount of very acid pulp around the seeds.

Propagation:

Seedlings, grafting.

Seed info.:

treatment:

storage:

Management:

Mixed planting with other trees that could serve as a support.

Remarks:

The thick aromatic peel is used to make candied peel for cakes, etc. Peel is cut from unripe fruit, sliced, fermented in brine, then heated in sugar syrup.

