

Southern China, Vietnam

- Trade name:** Sweet orange.
- Common names:** **English:** Orange **Luganda:** Muchungwa.
- Ecology:** Sweet orange is a native of southern China or Cochin China. It is now grown widely throughout the tropics and subtropics but is no longer known in the wild. Orange trees produce more fruit with irrigation.
- Uses:** Firewood, food (fruit), juice (fruit), oil (flowers, leaves, peel).
- Description:** An evergreen shrub or tree, 6-12 m with dense foliage and rather thin spines beside the leaves, twigs angled when young, often with **thick spines**. **LEAVES:** oval, 5-15 cm x 2-8 cm, shiny dark green above, the **stalk narrowly winged**, having a **line or break with the leaf blade** (articulation). **FLOWERS:** very fragrant, one or many in leaf axils, 2-3 cm across, 5 white petals, 20-25 stamens in groups. **FRUIT:** rather variable in colour and shape, rounded green-yellow-orange, 4-12 cm across, the **relatively thin skin hard to remove**, the pulp surrounding the seeds sweet-sour but juicy.
- Propagation:** Seedlings, wildings, grafting. In the past much citrus has been grown from seed, but now it is common practice to grow from budding. Rootstock seeds are sown into seed beds and later transplanted into polypots for 5-6 months. Rough lemon is the most commonly used rootstock. They may be budded after a further 6 months. Small or unhealthy seedlings should be discarded. Rootstocks of grapefruit are used in waterlogged places.
- Seed:**
- treatment:** not necessary.
- storage:** not recommended. After removal from the fruit, the seeds are washed and gradually dried. If allowed to dry out, they lose their viability. They may be stored in ground charcoal if required.
- Management:** Pruning to encourage branching and keep the tree low. This allows easy harvesting of the fruit. Pesticides are required to control diseases.
- Remarks:** Sweet orange does not do well in high-rainfall areas. Farmers have been discouraged because of the diseases which attack sweet orange. The sweet orange is the most widely grown and economically important of all citrus species in the world.

