

*Citrus sinensis*

## Rutaceae

Southern China, Vietnam

**English:** Orange

**Kunda:** Lalanje

**Nyanja:** Lalanje

**Ecology:** Oranges are the most widely grown and important citrus fruit, no longer known in the wild. They are very widely grown both in the tropics and subtropics but do not do well in very wet areas nor at high altitudes. The tree is to be found in all districts planted either by individual farmers or institutions. They produce more fruit with irrigation.

**Uses:** **Food** (fruit), **juice** (fruit).

**Description:** A **well-shaped tree** 6–12 m with **dense foliage** and rather thin spines beside leaves. The twigs are angled when young. **LEAVES:** oval to 15 cm, 2–8 cm across, dark green, edge entire, the **stalk narrowly winged**, having a **line or joint with the leaf blade**. **FLOWERS:** flower buds white, in clusters of 1–6, sepals and petals thick, 5 recurved petals, 2–3 cm across. **FRUIT:** rather variable in colour and shape, **rounded**, smooth, green-orange-yellow, **4–12 cm across**, the relatively **thin skin hard to separate**, the pulp surrounding the seeds **sweet-sour but juicy**.

**Propagation:** Budding or grafting on rootstock of rough lemon.

**Seed:** –

**treatment:** not necessary.

**storage:** –

**Management:** Pruning to encourage branching and to keep the fruit low for harvesting. Watering and mulching.

**Remarks:** There are many cultivars, and desirable ones are grafted onto rootstock trees grown from seed. Most citrus can be both self- and cross-pollinated. The strong fragrance attracts bees to the flowers which have much nectar and sticky pollen. The most common varieties in Eastern Province are Washington Navel and Valencia. Washington Navel has bigger fruit with less seed and is more juicy, but Valencia is sweeter. Oranges are eaten both fresh and for juice: a ripe orange or tangerine contains about 12% sugar. Essential oils can be extracted from flowers, leaves and peel. A glass of orange juice provides the daily requirement of vitamin C.

