



Citrus - Limequat

Citrus × floridana (J. Ingram & H. Moore) Mabb.

Rutaceae

Species description

Limequats are hybrids between the lime (*Citrus aurantifolia*) and kumquat species (*Fortunella* spp.), developed by Walter Swingle at a U.S. Department of Agriculture research station in Florida around 1909. There are three cultivars, 'Eustis,' 'Lakeland,' and 'Tavares.' The trees are evergreen and very thorny with spreading, arching branches. The fruit is small, round to oval, yellow-green to yellow-orange depending on the cultivar, with acidic flesh and a sweet rind, and contains many seeds. Limequat trees grow 10



feet high with a canopy of 10 feet. Citrus are generally are hardy to 23°F-26°F, though this may depend on cultivar. Limequats are more cold tolerant than Mexican limes.

Natural and cultural history

The limequat is a citrus hybrid, first developed through the USDA in 1909. The trees are now grown in the U.S. as well as Japan, Israel, Spain, Malaysia, South Africa, Armenia, and the United Kingdom.

Planting considerations and propagation techniques

Limequat trees prefer full sun and a spacing of 10 feet apart each way for maximum production. They are very spiny so care should be taken in their placement, especially in public spaces. Citrus flowers are self-fertile and require no cross-pollination, though honeybees are effective at pollinating flowers. In general, citrus trees can grow on a wide range of soil types from sand to loam to heavy clay as long as they are well drained. Citrus trees do best with a soil pH of 6-6.5, though different rootstocks prefer different soil types.

Limequats may be propagated from seeds; remove flesh and soak seeds for one to several days. Keep seeds moist until germination. Trees may also be propagated by grafting or air layering.

Water needs

Citrus need about 4-6 inches of water per month in the summer; they are generally not drought tolerant and need careful attention to produce well-developed fruit.

Care

Citrus trees should be trained to a suitable shape with an open center. There are three primary pruning objectives: increase total leaf area, improve airflow through the canopy, and increase light to the branches. Proper training keeps trees the correct size for ease of care and harvest.

Citrus are prone to many diseases and pests. We recommend consulting a Cooperative Extension citrus specialist.

(See Yuma Cooperative Extension, <https://extension.arizona.edu/yuma>; and <http://extension.arizona.edu/sites/extension.arizona.edu/files/pubs/az1492.pdf>).

Harvesting and processing

Citrus should be harvested when it has full color and can be eaten immediately. The tree is the best place to store citrus. Limequats are yellow-green to yellow-orange when ripe, depending on the cultivar. They may be eaten whole, and the rind is subacid like a kumquat, while the flesh is acidic like a lime. The fruits can be used in cooking as in any recipe calling for lemon or lime. They are also great in marmalades and added to cold drinks.

References and resources

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