

Buddha's Hand Citron

(*Citrus medica* L.)



Description

Also known as the Fingered Citron, this unusual and fragrant citrus fruit is split into a number of finger-like sections, somewhat resembling a human hand. It has been prized for centuries in China and Japan, where it is used for perfuming rooms and clothing, and in religious ceremonies.

The fruit has a yellow rind when mature, and contains no flesh, juice or seeds. Although Buddha's Hand is popular for its ornamental value, the rind of the fruit is also eaten in some Asian countries. The tree has large leathery leaves, and has thorns. Trees are small and can be grown in a container.

Performance in New Zealand

Currently there is no experience with growing Buddha's Hand in New Zealand. However, citrons are sensitive to frost (more sensitive than lemons), and will require a warm frost-free site. They are reported to be compatible with trifoliata and citrange rootstocks.

References

Reuther, W., H. J. Webber, and L. D. Batchelor. 1967. "The Citrus Industry: History, world distribution, botany and varieties", Vol. 1. University of California, Berkeley, 611 p.

Saunt, J. 2000. "Citrus varieties of the world", 2nd ed. Sinclair International Limited, Norwich, 156 p.

Availability

Budwood of Buddha's Hand was distributed by the NZCBS for the first time in January 2000. Trees should be available in garden centres this year (2001).