

Kaffir Lime

(*Citrus hystrix* D.C.)



Description

Also known as Combavas or Makrut lime, the Kaffir lime is widely grown throughout south-east Asia from Shri Lanka to the Philippines. It is usually produced on a small scale with the rind and leaves used for flavouring food (especially Thai curries). The rind oil is used in as a perfumed hair rinse with insecticidal properties and also as a leech repellent for feet.

The tree is small with many thin branches. Fruit is yellow when matured but harvested while still green. Kaffir lime fruit are small, necked, bumpy-textured thick rind, almost no juice, with a bitter and very acidic taste. Kaffir limes are usually very seedy.

Performance in New Zealand

The New Zealand Citrus Budwood Scheme (NZCBS) has grown Kaffir lime successfully in the glasshouse on trifoliolate orange and citrange rootstocks, and young plants have been established outdoors at the Kerikeri Research Centre. Kaffir lime is frost sensitive and so may do best in frost-free locations.

References

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

Availability

Budwood of Kaffir lime was distributed by the NZCBS for the first time in January 1998, and so trees should be available in garden centres.