

## Lemonade (*Citrus limon x cinensis*)

**Common Names:** Lemonade

**Order:** Sapindales

**Family:** Rutaceae

**Genus:** *Citrus*

**Species:** *limon x cinensis*

**Growth Habit:** small tree

**Height:** 2.5-3m

**Width:** 1.5-2.5m

**Description:** a cross between an orange and a meyer lemon, it has a dense, rounded canopy with glossy evergreen leaves that are oil-filled and ovate in shape with entire edges. The branches are often armoured with small thorns.

**Flowers:** creamy white, five-petaled flowers are blushed pink on the outside and appear as either singles or in clusters, on new wood or semi-mature growth. They have a sweet, citrus perfume.

**Fruit:** both the skin and flesh of the spherical or ovate fruit are yellow or yellow-orange in colour when mature. The fruit can be easily peeled and separated into segments with each segment containing 1-2 seeds. It has a sweet, slightly-effervescent citrus flavour that is lower in acidity and bitterness than other citrus. Trees may bear several crops per year but the main crop is usually from March to May.

**Location Preferences:** sub-tropical climatic zones with fertile, free-draining soil. Prefers a sheltered area but tolerates some wind. Can tolerate a semi-shaded position but full sun will produce more flowers and fruit. They do not tolerate waterlogging.

**Irrigation:** drought-tolerant but do enjoy regular deep watering every 2-3 weeks. Supply regular water (at least once or twice/week) when young and as fruit is forming.

**Maintenance:** it is not necessary to regularly prune lemonade trees to produce fruit. Conduct regular maintenance prunes to remove dead or diseased wood, crossing branches, congested growth (improving air flow within the tree will decrease the likelihood of fungal diseases and improve access if pest spray is required) and citrus gall wasp galls. Citrus prefer a good supply of trace elements. Test and maintain a slightly acidic soil (pH 6-7) to ensure access to iron, magnesium and zinc. Signs of deficiency include yellowing of the leaves (leaf veins remain green) and slowed growth. Regular foliar feeds with seaweed emulsion and fertilising trees in spring and autumn with compost and/or worm castings can assist in prevention. Fertilise with a well-balanced organic citrus food in July, November and February. Spread evenly around the tree and out to 1m beyond the canopy. Water in well.

**Pests and Diseases:** scale (and the associated ants and sooty mould), fruit fly, leaf miners and gall wasp are the main pests. Sap-sucking bronze-orange stink bugs, mealybugs and aphids may also be a problem. Unless infestation is great most damage done is only superficial. Prevention by keeping the tree healthy. Avoid wholesale pest sprays as this will also kill pollinators.

### References:

McFarlane, A. (2011) *Organic Fruit Growing*, Sydney: Harper Collins Publishers

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