

Description

Kaffir Lime
Citrus Hystrix
Family: Rutaceae

Kaffir Lime is a thorny shrub about 2m tall that produces unique 'double-leaves'. A small green fruit about 4cm round with bumpy skin emerges from a small white flower.

Growing Tips

It prefers moist rich soil and warm, sunny, humid conditions during the growing season. It loses its leaves if watered too much or if it's too dry or too cold. For best results plant about 2m apart. In cooler climates it can be grown indoors in a sunny position but must be re-potted every year.

Parts Used

Leaves, fruit and rind.

Uses

The leaves are used in Thai, Indonesian and Malaysian and Cambodian cooking, and are an ingredient of the well-known tom yum soup. The leaves should be either finely chopped or crushed and removed before serving a dish. The rind gives curry pastes the astringency, and the zest of the fruit is used to flavour rums in Madagascar and La Reunion. Leaves lose some flavour with drying and the best way to preserve is by freezing.

Lime juice contains citronellol which is effective as an insect and parasite repellent.

Origin & History

This is a native to the Asian region, from the Philippines to Thailand where it is called bai makrut and is believed to ward off evil spirits so planted at entrances of homes.

The juice of the fruit is rubbed into the scalp to remove dandruff and on the skin to clear it of parasites.

