

# *Citrus aurantiifolia*

**Common name:** Key Lime, Kaghzi-nimbu

**Family:** Rutaceae

**Habit:** Tree

**Location:** Science Block

**Distribution:** It is a citrus hybrid, native to tropical Southeast Asia. China, the United States, and India are the leading lime producing countries. They were spread throughout the world via migration and trade.

## **Description:**

Lime fruit is similar to lemon, but has a thinner skin, which turns yellow on ripening. Lime is a shrubby tree, to 5 m, with many thorns. Dwarf varieties are popular with home growers. The trunk rarely grows straight, with many branches that often originate quite far down on the trunk. The leaves are ovate 1–3.5 in long, resembling orange leaves (the scientific name *aurantiifolia* refers to this resemblance to the leaves of the orange, *C. aurantium*). The flowers are 1 in in diameter, are yellowish white with a light purple tinge on the margins. Flowers and fruit appear throughout the year but are most abundant from May to September. Lime have an odour similar to lemon, but more fresh. The juice is as sour as lemon juice, but more aromatic. The Key lime is usually picked while it is still green, but it becomes yellow when ripe.

**Uses:** Lime pickles are an integral part of Indian cuisine, especially in South India. Other Indian preparations of limes include sweetened lime pickle, salted pickle, and lime chutney. It is a common ingredient in authentic Mexican, Vietnamese and Thai dishes. Key lime has antibacterial, anticancer, anti-diabetic, antifungal, anti-inflammatory and antioxidant effects. It provides metabolites that help protect the body from disease.

