

Orange

Botanical Name: *Citrus cinensis* (Rutaceae)

Common Name: Orange, Sweet Orange, Zoete sinaasappel (in Dutch).

Origin: Oranges originate from South East Asia but are found in most tropical and sub-tropical climates around the world. Oranges were possibly created long ago as a hybrid between two other Citrus fruits: Pomelo and Tangerine.

Distribution: Throughout tropical and subtropical countries. The main areas of world production are Brazil, the United States and Mexico, Spain, Italy, Egypt, India, China and Australia.

Australian Distribution: In all mainland states.

Preferred Climate and Soil Types: The Orange is sub-tropical and young trees are susceptible to frosts. The humidity of the Top End does have an effect on fruit quality on some varieties, and the skin will be green in colour. Oranges can grow on a wide variety of soil types if sufficiently aerated and deep enough to allow for required root development.

Description: An evergreen tree that in the Darwin region grows to 2.5-3 metres. It has a rounded crown of slender branches. Leaves are aromatic and oval in shape. It has fragrant white flowers. The skin is dotted with minute glands containing an essential oil. The Valencia Orange, as in the Community Orchard is primarily grown for processing and orange juice production, but has excellent taste and internal colour making it desirable for fresh markets as well. Fruit has an average diameter of 70 – 75mm. After bloom, it usually carries two crops on the tree, the old and the new. Valencia oranges are prized as the only variety of orange in season during summer.

Varieties: There are many varieties, including, Blood, Joppa, Navel and Valencia Oranges. They are grafted on suitable rootstocks to suit each soil variation.

Culture: The trunk of the young tree should be protected from the sun in the first few months after planting. This can be done using commercially available tree guards or by loosely wrapping the trunk with shade cloth or a similar material. Use aged mulch around the tree to cool the soil and reduce moisture loss. Apply sufficient water to keep the soil moist to a depth of 30 to 40 cm. During the first growing season apply a fertiliser slightly higher in nitrogen every 2-3 months, reducing the frequency in subsequent years.

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Pests and Diseases: Mites, scale, mealybugs, aphids, leafminer and fruit flies.

Fruiting Season: April to May. Minor crops can occur at other times.

Harvesting: Harvested locally when the skin is pale green in colour, and usually harvested by hand, by pulling or clipping the fruits.



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