

# FGCU Food Forest

## Plant Database

### Finger Lime (*Citrus australasica*)

**Origin:** Australia

**Description:** The elongated cylindrical brown or purple producing flesh that is green/yellow to pink. The fruit has a distinctive caviar appearance.

**Uses:** Food

**Harvest:** May-June

**Flower:** Flowers are 10-14 mm in diameter, white/pale pink in color and appear in late summer.

**Tolerance:** Withstands light frosts; In a north facing site is preferred.



**General Description:** *C. australasica* is a large shrub to small tree up to 6 m tall, with spines up to 25mm long. The leaves have many aromatic oil glands. Flowers are white to pale pink. The elongated cylindrical fruits may be green, yellow, black, brown or purple producing flesh that is green/yellow to pink. The fruit has a high commercial value because of its distinctive caviar appearance and tangy taste, making it a desirable species of *Citrus* to grow. There are currently 5 registered finger lime cultivars including 'Alstonville', 'Blunobia Pink Crystal', 'Durhams Emerald', 'Judy's Everbearing' and 'Pink Ice'.

- **Native Origin:** It occurs along the east coast of Australia, ranging mainly from south east Queensland to north-east New South Wales in tropical to subtropical rainforest communities.
- **General History:** Early settlers consumed the fruit and retained the trees when clearing for agriculture. Colonial botanists suggested that they should be cultivated. The finger lime has been recently popularized as a gourmet bush food. Commercial use of finger lime fruit started in the mid-1990s in boutique marmalades made from wild harvested fruit. By 2000 the finger lime

was being sold in restaurants, including the export of fresh fruit. The finger lime has been recently grown on a commercial basis in Australia in response to high demand for the fruit. There is an increasing range of genetic selections which are budded onto citrus rootstock. With the sudden high market demand for the fruit the primary source of genetic material for propagation has been selections from wild stock.

- **Distribution:** Rainforests of north-eastern New South Wales and south-east Queensland. It is hardy in tropical to temperate climates in well drained conditions. Plants are usually slow growing and seedlings may take from 5 to 15 years to reach maturity.
- **Season of Harvest:** Depending on climatic conditions and cultivar, fruit mature between December and May, with the main harvest period occurring between March and May. Fruit are selectively picked every 10–14 days over a 6–8 week period depending on tree age and cultivar. Finger limes have a fruit development period of around 5 months from flowering to harvest.
- **Culinary Uses:** Used in chutneys, jams, marmalades, savory sauces and refreshing drinks. In great demand for culinary use as it displays well as a garnish. The fruits can also be frozen successfully without destroying the fruits flavor or texture on thawing,

Finger Lime	
Scientific Classification	
Kingdom:	Plantae
(unranked):	Angiosperms
(unranked):	Eudicots
(unranked):	Rosids
Order:	Sapindales
Family:	Rutaceae
Genus:	<i>Citrus</i>
Species:	<b><i>C. australasica</i></b>

#### **Sources**

<http://www.anbg.gov.au/gnp/interns-2013/citrus-australasica.html>

<http://anpsa.org.au/c-aust.html>

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Citrus\\_australasica#Cultivation\\_and\\_uses](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Citrus_australasica#Cultivation_and_uses)

[http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0016/320272/growing-australian-native-finger-limes.pdf](http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0016/320272/growing-australian-native-finger-limes.pdf)

<http://www.daleysfruit.com.au/bushfood/fingerlime.htm>