

FGCU Food Forest

Plant Database

Kumquat (*Citrus japonica*)

Quick Facts

Origin: China and South Asia

Description: They are slow-growing short trees, from 8 to 15 ft tall, with dense branches, sometimes bearing small thorns. The leaves are dark glossy green and the fruit is round to oval-shaped with a thin peel that ripens to yellow/orange.

Uses: Food

Harvest: Late autumn to mid-winter.

Flower: Sweetly fragrant, 5-parted, white flowers are borne singly or 1 to 4 together in the leaf axils.

Tolerance: Suitable for: light (sandy), medium (loamy) and heavy (clay) soils. Suitable pH: acid, neutral and basic (alkaline) soils. It can grow in semi-shade (light woodland) or no shade. It prefers moist soil. They cease growth when temperatures drop below 13°C.



General Description: They are slow-growing evergreen shrubs or short trees, from 2.5 to 4.5 meters (8 to 15 ft) tall, with dense branches, sometimes bearing small thorns. The leaves are dark glossy green, and the flowers are white, similar to other citrus flowers, borne singly or clustered in the leaf-axils. Depending on size, the kumquat tree can produce hundreds or even thousands of fruits each year. The tree can be hydrophytic, grown in water, with the fruit often found floating on water near shore during the ripe season. Kumquats are

rarely grown from seed as they do not do well on their own roots. In China and Japan they are grafted onto the trifoliate orange (*Poncirus trifoliata*). This has been found the best rootstock for kumquats in northern Florida and California and for dwarfing for pot culture.

- **Native Origin:** The plant is native to south Asia and the Asia-Pacific region. The earliest historical reference to kumquats appears in literature of China in the 12th century.
- **General History:** They were described in Chinese literature in 1178 A.D. A European writer in 1646 mentioned the fruit as having been described to him by a Portuguese missionary who had labored 22 years in China. In 1712, kumquats were included in a list of plants cultivated in Japan. They were introduced to Europe in 1846 by Robert Fortune, collector for the London Horticultural Society, and shortly thereafter into North America. Kumquats have been called "the little gems of the citrus family".
- **Distribution:** Kumquats have long been cultivated in India, Japan, Taiwan, the Philippines, and Southeast Asia. They have been grown in Europe and North America since the mid-19th Century, mainly as ornamental dooryard trees and as potted specimens in patios and greenhouses. They are grown mainly in California, Florida and Texas; to a lesser extent in Puerto Rico, Guatemala, Surinam, Colombia and Brazil. In South India, they can be grown only at high elevations. There is limited cultivation in Australia and South Africa.
- **Season of Harvest:** Kumquat fruit is generally in season from late autumn to mid-winter. Despite their ability to survive low temperatures, as in the vicinity of San Francisco, California, the kumquat trees grow better and produce larger and sweeter fruits in warmer regions.
- **Uses:** Kumquats are frequently eaten raw. As the rind is sweet and the juicy center is sour, the raw fruit is usually consumed either whole, to savor the contrast, or only the rind is eaten. Kumquats, which are high in vitamins A and C and potassium. They can also be processed into preserves, jams, marmalades, or candied. They are sometimes pickled or made into sauce, and are used to flavor meat and poultry dishes. Kumquats can also be sliced and added to salads. In recent years kumquats have gained popularity as a garnish for cocktail beverages, including the martini as a replacement for the more familiar olive. A kumquat liqueur mixes the fruit with vodka or other clear spirit.

Kumquat	
Scientific Classification	
Kingdom:	Plantae
(unranked):	Angiosperms
(unranked):	Eudicots
(unranked):	Rosids

Order: Sapindales

Family: Rutaceae

Genus: *Citrus*

Species: ***C. japonica***

Sources

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kumquat#Origin>

<http://eol.org/pages/483556/overview>

<http://www.pfaf.org/user/Plant.aspx?LatinName=Fortunella+japonica>

<https://www.hort.purdue.edu/newcrop/morton/kumquat.html#Harvesting>

<http://nassau.ifas.ufl.edu/horticulture/fruit/kumquat.html>

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