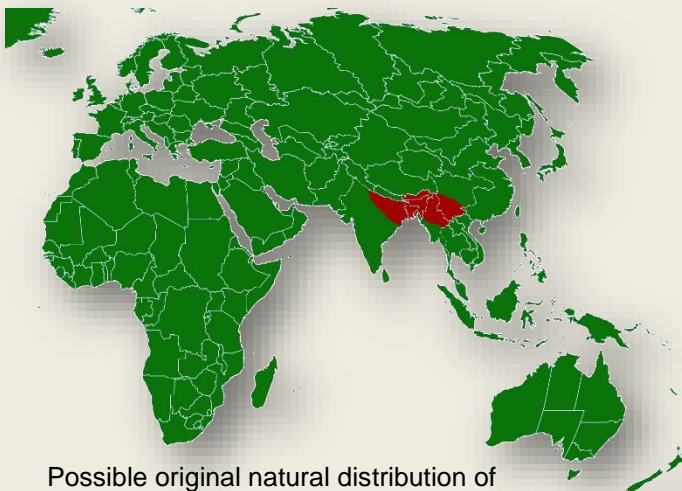


Citrus medica var. *sarcodactylis* Buddha's Hand Citron

Buddha's Hand is much prized in Asian societies as a symbol of wealth, happiness and longevity and was supposedly brought from India to China by Buddhist monks after the fourth century CE, however according to David Mabberly, introduction to China occurred in the eighth century. The natural distribution is from south and south-eastern Asia, although it is speculated that it probably originated from the region of north-eastern India and south-western China. It is cultivated in many parts of the world, including India, China, Japan, Vietnam, Sri Lanka, Thailand, USA and Australia. The fruit is often presented as an offering in temples. Images of the Buddha's Hand appear in jade, ivory and wooden carvings, and in classic Chinese prints. In Chinese it is known as 佛手柑, in Japanese 仏手柑 and in Korean 불수감. In Hindi it is known as *haind oph buddha pha* - हैंड ऑफ बुद्धा फल



Possible original natural distribution of
Buddha's Hand Citron

The Buddha's Hand Citron, *Citrus medica* var. *sarcodactylis*, would have to be the most unusual of all *Citrus*. Instead of rounded or oval fruit with which we are more familiar, the *fingers* develop as the carpels separate into segments, splitting the fruit longitudinally. Inside the fruit there are no seeds and rarely juicy pulp, just white, spongy pith, referred to, curiously to our minds,

as *albedo*. Some botanists dispute the varietal name and consider it to be a *cultivar* (produced from selective breeding), so the scientific name should be written *Citrus medica* 'Fingered'. The fragrance of mature fruit is similar to that of *Osmanthus* or violets, and is largely derived from the compound *beta-ionone*.

Although the fruit lacks the juice found in other *Citrus* varieties, it is much prized for the aromatic fragrance of the peel. The aromatic fruit is used to perfume rooms and clothing and has been used both as an air freshener and as an insect repellent. It has long been used in cooking, particularly as in marinades for fish dishes, and is also often



candied and used in desserts. Dried, sliced peel is used in tonics in Chinese traditional medicine. Buddha's Hand is only a small tree or shrub, about 3 metres, and is much valued as a garden plant. They are exceptional as tub specimens. Most fruits are totally seedless, so without human intervention, the plants that produce these fruits with such unusual shapes would not have survived.

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University of California Riverside, College of Agricultural and Natural Sciences:

<https://citrusvariety.ucr.edu/citrus/buddha.html>

Wikipedia: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Buddha%27s_hand



Stages in fruit development



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