

Papa Citron
and
Mama Papeda

a one act play celebrating the lime

Natty Mark Samuels

Papa Citron
and
Mama Papeda

a one act play celebrating the Lime

Papa Citron and Mama Papeda

a one act play celebrating the Lime

With a backdrop of varied tones of green and yellow, a figure in a green covering, face and body unseen, walks onto the stage and sits on a log to his right. He speaks...

Lime

I come from a family of great travellers. We've been travelling so long, no one can say for sure, where we first came from. Some say Malaysia, others think it was India, while there are those who have decided that it was Myanmar. In the end, it matters less; for it is as much about what we've done and are doing, as where we first came from. All I know, is that my ancestors are citron and papeda: and I am their descendent called lime. **As the last word is uttered, another figure walks on, in a yellow covering, face and body also unseen. The first figure, holding his outstretched hand across his heart, bows his head to the new arrival, who sits on another, more elevated log – to the left of the other one - and begins to speak...**

Citron

Yes young man, as the humans would say, "the jury is still out" on my origins, but general consensus points to India, although some are now saying the Oceanic islands. I, Citron, was the first member of our family – the Rutaceae – to leave the lands of Asia and to know life in Europe. It was the 4th century BC and the time of the Macedonian who was known as the Great. After his victory at the Battle of Hydaspes in present day Pakistan and his return to Europe, he brought me with him: my first country of residence in that continent was Greece.

But I am getting ahead of myself, young man. For some time between my birth and the Middle Ages, I met the lovely Papeda, who they say may have come from Malaysia - and the result of our encounter was you. **At this point, a third figure walks on, also unseen and as with Lime, she is suited in green, although this green covering has a bumpy surface. She receives the same respectful gesture from Lime, then she sits on the log next to Citron, sharing a long embrace. There are glasses in front of the logs.**

Papeda

Some have used me, Papeda, as medicine: others have utilized me as shampoo and as soap. Yes child of mine, sometime in the distant past, old man citron and I got together and produced the gem that is you. We have watched how you have developed over time and we are more than happy with your wonderful progress. You and your cousin lemon give so much, in combination also: I think now of lime and lemon marmalade! Yes! **They smile and nod in agreement.** It is good to see the descendants, taking on the role of the ancestors, for we are givers: we have always been givers. We have so much that can help, how can we hold it back? I believe we were created to give and that is what we did, didn't we Citron?

Citron

Yes dear Papeda, it is like we signed a treaty of eternal offerings and we have never broken the agreement. Whether used medicinally, to lower blood pressure and boost the immune system, or spiritually, when those of the Jewish faith utilize me to say thanks to God, I have been a presenter of gifts. **A short pause in conversation, as we see video imagery of Hassidic Jews holding and hand sampling citrons.**

Lime

And there are many people around the world, who every day when awakening and before sleeping at night, will take a drink – hot or cold – of lime juice with water; as a health tonic, de-toxifier: a lovely way to enjoy water. I have watched the way the elders have given and I have followed suit. They are at the higher branch of learning, so I remained the focused student.

Papeda

I see that your learning has been consistent. I hear you are the product of one of the biggest citrus plantations in Central America!

Lime

Yes, in Colima, Mexico. Limes as far as the eye can see. Some of us are called Persian and of course, some are known as Mexican. And they use us in everything: salads, soups, meat and fish dishes, snacks, soft drinks, beers, cocktails and tacos. We are a part of the national cuisine, where we are known as "limon." Would love to take you there, Mama Papeda.

Papeda

Would love to go and see all that you offer. And after the tour of Mexico, I'll take you to Malaysia. To walk through a land of ferns, where green and green intermingle, rivers intersperse and waterfalls flow and enchant you.

Citron

Ahhh, beautiful. **He gives her an affectionate squeeze.** But let's step back, before we go further. As the Jews popularised me in ancient times, it was the Muslims in the medieval era, who pioneered the introduction of other members of the family into Europe – oranges, lemons and limes - in the southern parts of the continent. **A short pause in conversation, as we see imagery of Islamic Andalusian architecture.** And mentioning followers of faith, it was the Crusaders who facilitated our introduction into other parts of Europe, after their time in the Middle East. Their religions have often generated war, but has also given rise, to the distribution of the goodness of us. Amongst the humans, there has always been belief and war, but because of the qualities within us, we are promoters of health and peace.

Lime

And that is the legacy I adhere to. For example, I am used in Guinea Bissau, a country on the coast of West Africa, as a preventative against the onslaught of cholera. And it was the West Africans, during the time of enslaved labour in the Caribbean, who grew the limes that counteracted the scurvy, that plagued the English sailors: limes from the Caribbean, India and elsewhere. **There is a pause in conversation, as we see a lamentable scene of sailors laying down, suffering from fatigue, teeth falling out, bleeding from here and there, swellings and vomiting.** As you know, that's how the English acquired the national moniker "Limey" and apparently, there is a part of the east end of London, where the warehouses were located that held us, that is known as Limehouse.

Papeda

Yes my child. Creator gave us a remit and down through time, all the members of the family, wherever we began - grapefruit in Barbados, clementine in Algeria, ortanique in Jamaica, or the African Cherry Orange of West and Central Africa - we have fulfilled the commission.

Citron

And you young man, have made a massive contribution: you're everywhere!

Finger Lime in Australia

Papeda

Limette in Tunisia

Lime

And the Rangpur in India.

Citron

Merderka in Malaysia

Papeda

Giant Key in America

Lime

The Ambilobe in Madagascar.

They laugh together

Citron

And then we come to Brazil, where lime seems like a national treasure. Isn't it lovely

Papeda, to know that citrus fruits are no longer the possession of only the rich?

Papeda

Yes my dear. I remember when the poorer humans could only afford apples and plums and that it was the working class women, such as the actress Nell Gwynn, mistress of King Louis, who were the sellers of oranges, in the streets and theatres of England. As signs of prestige, the wealthy built orangeries, to house and protect their citrus treasure, from the cold and the frost. There was one at Blenheim Palace – birthplace of the one known as Winston Churchill - near Oxford, which is now used as a restaurant. Previously, our trees and what they bear, were ornaments for display in country houses, now we are affordable to all, in the shops and markets of every community.

Lime

That's so good to hear. Going back to Brazil, we can prove that point of accessibility for all.

He raises himself, talking while walking around. Everyone can drink Caipirinha (kai-purr-reen-yah) the national drink, consisting of lime, sugar and cachaca (ka-shah sah), which is sugar cane juice. All have access to a Mango and Avocado Salad with a Lime Dressing; to a Vinagrette of lime juice, olive oil, garlic, honey and pepper. One and all can enjoy the simple delight of lemonade.

Citron

Our legacy is intact!

Papeda

Lets drink a toast to that!

Citron

Yes

Lime

Yes

Raising the glasses in front of them, they drink.

Papeda

What a lovely blend, of lime juice, water, condensed milk and sugar.

Citron

That is limeade at its best! Quenches the thirst and delights the senses. Bless the creation of ice!

Lime

So good, Papa Citron and Mama Papeda, to have your approval.

Citron

You shall have it young man, for you deserve it. Respect must be given where respect is due.

Papeda

I second that! Well deserved my child.

Lime

Ahhh, bless you ancestors.

In Ethiopia, traditionally, we've been used alongside honey, to deal with stomach problems. Haramaya University, founded by Ras Tafari, as one of the first agricultural colleges in the country, is trailblazing research work into citrus. As a farm owner, Ras Tafari grew citrus amongst other foods and was presented with an ortanique by the Jamaican government, when he made that historic visit to that Caribbean country, in 1966. Lovers of limes, as well as the Mexicans, Brazilians and other nations, the Ethiopians make a fruit juice called Spris (pronounced spreecce), whose content is made up of lime juice, water, pineapple, papaya and avocado.

Citron

Sounds wonderful!

Papeda

Let's go!

They laugh together

Most of the citrus there, is grown in the Central Rift Valley. And just as the Riverside campus of the University of California supports the American citrus farmers, Haramaya University bolsters the work of the Ethiopian citriculturists: the human and the fruit, in positive interaction. So we give thanks for those such as Dr Olufemi Alabi, based at the Texas A&M University, supporting the Texan citrus farmers.

Citron

Yes, working together to counteract the scourge of citrus greening. Whether the African citrus psyllid or the Asian citrus psyllid, they are the enemy: our nemesis. We have fought against merciless winds, excess rain and frost, but the toughest battle – ongoing – is the one against the vectors: the insects that carry disease. ***A pause in conversation, as we see imagery of diseased fruit. While we see the imagery, we hear the following verse.***

I heard a lament from an orchard of lime;
Of the visit of threat,
The advent of debt,
A vector and its litany of crimes.
So many people weeping;
The dream had been smashed,
By an insect flash:
The clock had stopped at destruction time.

Papeda

Yes, the Lime Lamentation and its citrus variations, have been chanted for many years, in just as many countries. There is talk of stronger rootstocks and gene editing: of new approaches and another Plan B: still, we are here. As well as being anti-inflammatory, anti-viral, anti-microbial and anti-oxidant, we are also eternal.

Citron

Yes we are

Lime

Yes, like the perennial river that never dries up.

Papeda

I believe we are an integral part of the Creator's Master Plan: paramount in his vision for human health.

Citron

We are skin rejuvenators

Papeda

Digestion improvers

Lime

Featured in cancer prevention.

Citron

We lower blood sugar

Papeda

Are heart disease reducers

Lime

And fighters of all infection.

There are exclamations of agreement and approval: of self-affirmation.

Citron

We are blessed with all that is good, so we pass those blessings on.

Lime

sitting down again

And however they receive what we give, we just want them to take them! If we say, look at lime beverages, someone in Brazil will have a Limonade Suisse; on the islands of Bahamas, a Switcha; a UK resident may take our blessing through lime cordial; in Croatia, through a lime and lemon tea.

Citron

In Iran, in provinces such as Hormozgan, Fars and Sistan, they pickle and dry us, as well as juice us.

Papeda

Talking of Iran, what was the name of the medieval polymath, who wrote of the healing powers of citrus?

Lime

Ibn Sina aka Avicena.

Papeda

That's it my child! The wise men and women, past and present, expert in herbal knowledge, have acclaimed and continue to laud the healing qualities, of our Rutaceae family.

Lime

Yes and in the contemporary scene, we have herbalists such as Patrick Delves in Grenada, who praises what the lime has to offer. He's one of those who every morning, takes a drink of lime juice with water. Hopping across the Caribbean Sea into Belize, another country where the residents are lovers of lime, they make a tea from lime leaves - and using lime juice, water and sorell, they make a Hibiscus Lemonade. ***A short pause in conversation, as we see images of sorrel – in all its colouring - and of its lemonade.***

Citron

And it was Columbus and the Spanish conquistadors, who introduced citrus to the Caribbean. As well as being ferrymen of disease and death, they carried the citrus goodness. Many have come and gone, but we remain.

Lime

In Jamaica, they use me in a "bush tea." Lime leaf, lemongrass and soursop leaf. Some chew my leaf, as protection against the sore throat and the common cold. Many on the island plant a lime tree in their back garden. And some of the lovers of lime who grow me in their back garden, seem to cultivate me with music! They say that both the fruit and the music offer healing. ***There is a pause in conversation, while a minute of 'Peace and Love' by Freddie McGregor is heard. Citron and Papeda remain seated – upper movement, heads nodding and tapping of feet – while Lime, raising himself from the log, enjoys the dance that the music generates.*** That's my exercise for the day! ***They laugh together.***

Papeda

If I was human, I too would grow limes, to have an on-site and ready supply. Imagine being able to step out in the morning, to pick one or two and then to step back in, to make a fresh and awakening drink. Morning glory for sure!

Citron

Yes, a perfect start to the day my dear.

Lime

For the Indian as well as the Jamaican! Was just thinking ancestors, that it's apt that the country that possibly gave birth to Papa Citron, is the largest grower of me: India. I am a favoured ingredient in their making of chutneys. The practitioners of Ayurvedic medicine have used lime for centuries. They've used it – and continue to use it - for such ailments and conditions as high blood pressure, obesity and nausea. They recommend lime pickle in your food, as an aid to enhanced digestion.

Citron

Ahhh, India...that also gave us black pepper and possibly ginger: both have been standard items, in the medicine bag of the Ayurvedic healer, for thousands of years. And citrus and ginger are great in combination, in the culinary setting, as well as the medicinal one.

Papeda

And there's long-time evidence of that!

Lime

Yes! In India, they enjoy a lime and ginger drink, with an addition of cardoman; lime and ginger sherbet; or a lime pickle, with ginger, turmeric, garlic, fenugreek seed and red chilli powder. In Chinese traditional medicine too, for millennia, they have utilised lime, as well as other members of our family. They have used me for blood flow regulation and toxin removal. China, land of my cousin, Bhudda's Hand.

Citron

Yes, another one of my descendants. Very popular In China and Japan. Used there as an air and clothes freshener, as a talismanic item and as a gift to a Bhuddist temple. ***A short pause in conversation, as we see images of Buddha's Hand.*** As well as the medicinal, culinary, industrial and cosmetic, when we remember the use of me in Jewish faith and of Buddhas hand in temple visits, we have our uses in the spiritual realms also. And was it St. Augustine, who brought limes into Florida? Was it the Franciscans, who brought me into California? I propose another toast. ***Raising their glasses.*** To eternity and usefulness.

They drink

Papeda

Yes Citron.

Lime

I hope I follow positively in your footsteps.

Citron

You do young man, you do.

Papeda

Yes, my child, we are proud that you came from us.

Lime

Bless you both. I'm just following the manual that you wrote!

They smile and laugh together

Citron

With your relative Kumquat, you have given the world Limequat. Kumquat, the smallest and one of the sweetest members of the family.

Lime

You mentioned Japan just now Papa Citron: that's where we can go for limequat. An early 20th century coming, its now grown in South Africa, Armenia, Israel, America, Malaysia and parts of Europe, as well Japan. Recipes include Limequat and Oatmeal White Chocolate Cookies; Limequat and Calamondin Orange Marmalade - and Limequat and Chia Seed Muffins.

Papeda

Channels to culinary pleasure, we are also couriers of good health. We possess magnesium, good for muscle tone.

Citron

Calcium too, for the care of their bones.

Lime

We embellish your food and we enhance your health.

Papeda

We have phosphorus
For heartbeat surveillance

Citron

As well as potassium
For blood pressure maintenance.

Lime

We embellish your food and we enhance your health.

Papeda

We have Thiamin
For energy conversion

Citron

Riboflavin
For iron absorption

Lime

We embellish your food and we enhance your health.

Papeda

Loaded with Vitamin C
Great anti-oxidant

Citron

And Vitamin B5
A stress resistant

Lime

We embellish your food and we enhance your health.

They bow to and salute each other. Standing, they embrace, then leave the stage together: Citron and Papeda leading, arm in arm and Lime following happily after.

Sources

Lemons and Limes: Super Citrus Fruits and Their Health Benefits
Margaret Briggs – Abbeydale Press, **2007**.

Citrus: A History – **Pierre Laszlo** – The University of Chicago Press, **2007**.

Jamaican Citrus – **Prof. Robert J.Lancashire**: The Dept. of Chemistry,
University of the West Indies, **1995-2014**.

National Geographic

Empress Roots

The Spruce Eats

Citrus Pages

Mexconnect

Nedmeds

The George Mateljan Foundation

Wikipedia

Croatia Week

Belize Ag Report

Path to Ayurveda

Chinese Nutrition.org

Speciality Produce