

Naranjillo—*Solanum quitoense* L.¹

James M. Stephens²

Naranjillo, also known as lulo, comes from the highlands of Ecuador. The seldom mentioned and just as rarely grown vegetable is a relative of the eggplant. It is grown for its fruits occasionally in South Florida from seeds.

Description and Use

A specimen plant grown at Gainesville, FL, in 1983 was observed in mid-November to be fairly mature but without fruit. It was seeded the last of August and placed in the garden the first of September. The striking leaves were shaped like those of eggplant. An average leaf measures 8 to 12 inches long by 6 inches wide. The largest leaves were 20 inches long and 12 to 15 inches wide. Leaf veins were purple, contrasting vividly with a dull green leaf surface that is somewhat iridescent. Leaves are covered on top and bottom by short fuzz, as were the stems and petioles.

Fruit are sometimes called “golden fruit of the Andes.” The golf-ball sized fruits are filled with gelatin and are used in drinks and sauces. They ripen to a golden yellow color and are slightly rough in texture. The acidic, green interior contains several white seeds.



Figure 1. Naranjillo
Credits: James M. Stephens

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