

Friday, March 1, 2024

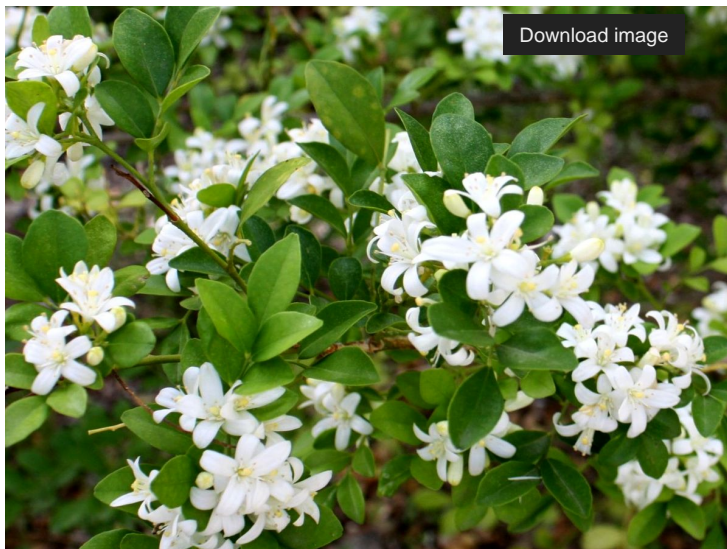
Murraya paniculata

Scientific name: *Murraya paniculata* Kaneh.

Family: *Rutaceae*

Common name: Orange Jasmine, Orange Jessamine

A highly branched and dense perennial plant, it can be considered a large shrub or small tree, growing to between 2 and 6 m in height. Its natural range is the tropical and subtropical areas of Southeast Asia, Malaysia and northern Australia, although it has naturalised in many other warm climates. It belongs to the same family as citrus fruits, and is known as orange-jasmine, Indian jasmine or Indian orange blossom.



The genus is named after Johann Andreas Murray, an 18th century Swedish professor of botany and medicine and disciple of Linnaeus. The name of the species is due to the fact that its flowers are grouped 3 by 3 in a panicle-like inflorescence. The petals are white and up to 2 cm long, and give off a magnificent aroma. The fruit is a globose berry of one cm and a striking deep red or orange colour; the animals that feed on them help to disperse them. The leaves are divided into elliptical leaflets, with an entire margin, retracted apex, and between 4 and 5 cm long and 2 cm wide, bright green in colour, darker at the top. They have a characteristic smell when squeezed between the fingers, due to glands with essential oils. The branches are brown, but the older ones are pale grey.

Its main use is as an ornamental, it flowers abundantly several times throughout the year. It produces more flowers if placed in full sun, although it tolerates partial shade. It has analgesic, anti-inflammatory and soothing medicinal properties. In Myanmar it is used for cosmetic purposes, as the ground trunk and water are used to make a cream used by the Burmese to protect themselves from the sun, which they apply to their faces in the form of drawings. The cream is called 'thanaka', which is also the name by which the murraya is known. At La Concepción there are examples in the staff car park, next to the waterwheel pool and in the historic garden.