



# The Land Where Lemons Grow: The Story Of Italy And Its Citrus Fruit

*Helena Attlee*

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Travellers have always been thrilled by the sight of citrus in Italy, where dark leaves and bright fruit seem to charge the landscape, making the trees symbols of a sun-soaked, poetic vision of the country. Citrus also holds a special place in the Italian imagination, and in *The Land Where Lemons Grow*, Helena Attlee sets out to explore its curious past and its enduring resonance in Italian culture. Building on a life of travel and work in Italy, she undertakes a journey encompassing the sticky streets of Ivrea during the Battle of Oranges, the comfortable gardens of Tuscany's villas and a magic triangle of land in Sicily, where the best blood oranges in the world grow in the shadow of a volcano. She maps the citron's long migration from the foothills of the Himalayas to the shores of southern Italy, traces the bitter juice of Seville oranges through ancient Roman and Renaissance cookery books, exposes early manifestations of the Mafia during the nineteenth-century citrus boom, and laments the loss of landscapes shaped by citrus cultivation. The book is a celebration of the unique qualities of Italy's citrus fruit, from bergamot that will thrive only on a short stretch of coastline, to Calabria's Diamante citrons, vital to Jews all over the world during the celebration of Sukkoth. *The Land Where Lemons Grow* is a heady mixture of travel writing, history, horticulture and art; a unique journey through Italy's cultural, culinary and political past. Helena Attlee is the author of four books about Italian gardens, and others on the cultural history of gardens around the world. Helena is a Fellow of the Royal Literary Fund and has worked in Italy for nearly 30 years.

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