

STRANGE FRUIT



Obscuring the gate leading into my courtyard is a prolific *yuzu* tree. Ten or 12 years ago, Yoshi purchased a tiny potted *yuzu* sprig at a Japanese market. It's now growing into the medium-sized tree that it aspires to be. *Yuzu* are cousins of limes, but much more potent, much more astringent. Japanese love them, skin and all, as flavoring for almost everything. Japanese friends adore it when Yoshi pulls out gift *yuzu*. Me? Well, a *yuzu* certainly adds pizzazz to a gin and tonic, or to *shochu*, the vodka-like Japanese liquor



made from anything that will ferment. *Kanpai!* To punctuate this Japanese salute, I insert my “Jackson” seal here. But what can one say about our kumquats? Apple-like, they grow vigorously

on a thorny bush poking up from backyard Korean grass – encouraged, no doubt, by moisture from a nearby sprinkler head. Consider those wicked thorns. What in the world does the plant think it's protecting? Nobody likes kumquats. Even the prowling raccoons and possums won't touch them. If the bush offered kumquats peeled, sliced and salted, there would be no takers. Poor thing. One is tempted to compose a *haiku* ode to the futility of it all. We have other strange fruit. Pomegranates, for example. Now there is a weird one. Cut it open and the insides look positively poisonous. Persimmons. Okay, they are not bad when ripe. Even a raccoon, no fool, will steal and eat sweet persimmons.

Jackson Sellers, Lake Forest, August 2007