

## The Lemon-Lime Trees

Larry looked out the window of the family car. His dad said, “Here’s our new house.”

“But I like our old house,” Larry said.

“Florida is going to be a great place to live,” Larry’s dad said. “You’ll grow to like it here. You just must give it some time.”



“I have an idea, let’s have a picnic in the yard as the movers unload the truck,” Larry’s mom said.

“There is a sandwich shop nearby. I can go get some,” Larry’s dad said.

“No. I like pizza. Is there pizza in Florida?” Larry asked.

“Of course this is. I’ll order pizza,” Larry’s dad replied.

The three ate a picnic in the yard and watched the movers unload the truck of all their things and brought them inside.

“I like my old house,” Larry said. “It had a swing set and a sandbox and a big tree in the front. I was going to climb it when I grew bigger.”

Larry ate his pizza. “All the trees in Florida are bad trees.”

Larry's mom pointed to the trees in their yard. "These are palm trees."

"I'll never be able to climb those."

"Larry," his mother said. "I know this seems like a tragedy to you, but Dad has a new job. Grandma is just two hours away and she will come visit us. Something good will happen from this move, and you will love it. It takes a little patience."

His parents set up his room just like in their old house. Larry found all his toys and his books. His mom said he should play outside. It was hot outside. There was no swing set. There was no slide and there was no sandbox.

His mom took him for a walk to a park. There were lots to do and many things to climb on. It was almost fun, but it was very hot outside.

"I like my old park better," Larry said.

When they returned home, Grandma was there!

“I have a surprise for you,” she said.

She waddled over to Larry on the back porch, carrying a big, blue pot. She set it down. “I give you these trees that have fruit with seeds in them. They will be yours for food.”

In the large pot were two small trees.



Grandma said, “One is a lemon tree, and one is a lime tree.”

“Are these Florida trees? I don’t like Florida trees.”

“These are special trees. They will bear fruit,” Grandma said.

“Which one is which?” Larry asked.

“I don’t know,” his grandmother exclaimed. “I forgot. By their fruit you will recognize them. Lemons are yellow and limes are green.”

“Will these be good to eat?” Larry asked.

“They may be a little sour,” Larry’s mom said.

“So, the fruit is not good?” Larry asked.

“These are good trees. Every good tree bears good fruit,” Grandma said.

“And we can make good pies from them,” Larry’s mom said.

“I like pumpkin pie,” Larry said.

Larry’s mom said, “It is up to you to take care of these trees and make the trees good.”

Larry thought about all the work he must do to take care of the trees. “I don’t want to,” Larry said and stomped his foot.

“Make a tree good and its fruit will be good, and we’ll have good pies, even better than pumpkin pie.” Grandma said.

“OK,” Larry said. “I will take care of these trees.”

Larry looked all around in the small branches.

“Ouch!”

“Oh, I forgot to warn you. These trees have thorns.”

Over the next few months, Larry would go out onto the back porch and take care of his two little trees. He watered them when they needed water. He pulled up the clover when it grew in the pot. He brushed away the bugs.

Grandma came to visit a second time. Larry showed her how much the trees have grown.

“See the little white flowers,” Larry said.

“Now you can tell which tree is which.” Grandma said. “Just smell the flowers.”

Larry sniffed at the small flowers and was careful not to touch the thorns.

“They have different smells!” Larry said. “But I don’t know what a lemon smells like or what a lime smells like.”

Grandma went inside and came back with a lemon popsicle. Larry sniffed it.

“Now smell the flowers again and tell me which is the lemon tree, and the other tree is the lime tree.”

“This one! This one is the lemon tree!”

Larry ate his popsicle. “And I like lemons.”

When he finished his popsicle, Larry stuck the stick into the ground next to the lemon tree. “Now I know which is which,” he said.

As the summer months slipped away it was not so hot outside. Larry played more and more in the park. He began to make new friends. His mom told him it was fall even if there were no trees dropping leaves. The palm trees in the yard did not change.

“We still have seasons in Florida,” his mother said. “They just aren’t as different from each other.”

“It seems like it has been summer all year,” Larry said.

“That’s why I like Florida. It still feels warm outside and already Thanksgiving is near,” Larry’s mom said.

When Thanksgiving Day arrived, Grandma came to visit again.

“Larry, show me your trees,” she said. “I want to see how much they have grown.”

Uh oh. Larry had forgotten about his trees. Grandma and Larry went out back to look at the pot. The trees were still there but their leaves looked dry. Each tree had some green fruit. They felt mushy.

“Look, Grandma. We have limes.”

“Well, they are still too small and not ready for the harvest.”

“My trees bore bad fruit. They must be bad trees.”

“No, Larry. The trees are just young and need extra love and care for them to grow and bear good fruit,” Grandma said. “Love is patient.”

The family had a big feast for Thanksgiving. Larry’s mom cooked a turkey. Larry’s dad gave thanks for all the many blessings they had during the year. After the turkey dinner Larry’s mom served pumpkin pie.

“Well, next year we can have lemon and lime pies,” Larry’s dad said. “Just take care of your trees.”

Larry struggled to hold back his tears. He did not eat his pumpkin pie. He just knew the lemon and lime pies would have been better. It was his fault. He forgot to take care of his trees.

“Larry, if it gets cold this winter, you must bring in the big blue pot. They trees will die if they freeze,” Grandma said.

Larry laughed. “Grandma, this is Florida. It never gets cold. It’s just one season.”

“There are always seasons. A season for everything.”

Not long after Thanksgiving, Christmas arrived. Larry had fun even though outside it didn’t seem like Christmas. There was no fireplace to hang stockings. The grass was still green. Larry didn’t know any Christmas songs for cool weather. Larry wore just a light jacket when he went out to play with his new gifts.

A month later, his dad said, “A winter storm is coming. It will be the first snowstorm for many years.” Larry looked outside and he wasn’t too sure. It looked warm. The next morning, Larry woke up and there was snow!

Snow covered everything. Larry’s mom helped him dress in his coat, hat and gloves. Larry made snow angels, made a small snowman and his whole family threw snowballs in the backyard.

Two days later, all the snow was gone. It was back to normal Florida. Larry went out back to play and noticed the big blue pot. The trees! They were limp and brown. They were dead. It was all his fault! They had frozen from the cold.

“Mom, I forgot to take the plants in. I’m so sorry. We won’t have any pies.”

Larry’s mom gave Larry a big hug. “I will take care of you. You will grow and be a good fruit.”

On Easter, Larry was in the backyard looking for Easter eggs with Grandma. He found an egg in the blue pot. Larry saw some small green trees growing in the blue pot.

“Mom, Dad, Grandma, the trees have come back. “They have risen from the grave,” Larry said. “They are alive again.”

His mom said, “They are new from the seeds from the fruit. Now you have new trees to take good care of.”

Grandma said, “Larry, you will guard these trees and will eat their fruit, and you will share the first fruits of every fruit tree.”

The next day, Larry’s dad came home with a shovel and many large bags of dirt. “This is special potting soil,” Larry’s dad said. “It feeds the small trees so they will grow big.”



Larry’s dad dug a big hole in the garden. Larry helped his dad as they took the small trees from the bright blue pot and planted them in the ground. They covered them with the special dirt.

Grandma said, “These trees will take root below and bear fruit above. Now you can say that you made a garden and planted all kinds of fruit trees in them. Just like it says in the Bible.”

Larry’s mom said, “You have planted them, and they have taken root; they grow and bear fruit.”

From that day forward, Larry took special care of his little trees. There were five new trees. He watered them when needed and never let them go dry. He placed the tree food on them that his dad gave him. Soon there were small flowers in the trees.



“Mom, Dad come look! All the trees have flowers. These flowers are lemon and these over here are lime.”

“How can you tell?” Larry’s dad asked.

“From the smell!”

“These will be good fruit,” Larry said.

Larry’s dad said, “You will eat the fruit of your labor; blessings and goodness will be yours.”

During the summer, the flowers turned to fruit. At first, they were small and green. By the time summer ended and the fall season began the fruit had grown much

bigger. The lemons changed from green to yellow. Larry knew the harvest would be soon.

One day, a week before Thanksgiving, Larry brought to his mother six yellow lemons and six green limes. “Mom,” Larry exclaimed, “We have a harvest.”

“Larry, you did a great job taking care of the trees.”

“I will bring one lemon and one lime to church on Sunday and place these in the offering.”

“Larry,” his mom said, “You are a good fruit.”

Two days before Thanksgiving, Larry’s cousins, Linda and Lucy from Lubbock, Texas came to visit, as well as his aunt and uncle. Larry showed his cousins the park where they had fun.

On Thanksgiving Day, Grandma arrived. She brought potatoes and green beans. Larry’s dad deep-fried a turkey. Larry’s mom made pies. Linda, Lucy and Larry went outside to play catch with a football.

At dinnertime, they all sat together. Larry’s dad gave thanks for all their blessings.

Grandma said, “And thank you for this great day where I can spend it with my two sons and all my grandchildren!”

They ate turkey, green beans, potatoes and dinner rolls. When they were all done, Larry’s mom and aunt brought out a slice of lemon and lime for everyone.

“No!” Larry said. “Linda and Lucy can’t have any of my pies. They did not take care of the trees.”

Larry’s mom said, “Linda and Lucy came all the way from Lubbock to visit you. They heard all about how well you took care of the trees, so the trees made good fruit.

Your harvest is a blessing. Would you like to share your first fruit with your family who loves you?”

“Yes!” Larry said. “Every can have some pie!”

“The parents have produced good fruit,” Grandma said. “Let us rejoice and be glad.”

