



PLANT FACT SHEET

Psidium guajava L.

GENUS *Psidium* FAMILY Myrtaceae

COMMON NAMES Guava

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Fruit, Seeds, Leaves, Seeds - oil, Flowers, Roots

The young leaves are eaten raw or cooked.

The fruit are eaten raw. The fruit can be used for jams and jellies. Half ripe fruit are added to help the jelly set.

The liquid from boiled guava seeds is used to flavour cheese.

The seeds are the source of an edible oil.

The roots can be used for soup.

DESCRIPTION

A small tree or shrub 8-10 m high. It is evergreen. It has smooth bark which is mottled. The bark peels off in smooth flakes. The plant branches close to the ground. The branches are four angled. Trees are shallow rooted. The leaves are opposite, dull green and somewhat hairy. They are oval and somewhat pointed at both ends. They are 15 cm long by 2-5 cm wide. The leaves have short leaf stalks. The flowers are white and showy and borne in loose irregular types of arrangements of one to three flowers. The petals are 1.5 to 2 cm long. Both self and cross pollination occurs due to insects. The flowers grow in the axils of leaves on new growth. The fruit are rounded and 4 to 5 cm long. They are green but turn yellow when ripe. The outer covering is firm and encloses a pink or nearly white sweet smelling edible pulp. This contains many seeds. It better selected varieties both the skin and the seeds are fully edible. Fruit vary from very acid to very sweet.

HABITAT

A tropical plant. It is native to C and S America. Guavas thrive in both humid and dry tropical climates. They do best in sunny positions. They grow wild and are also cultivated. In Papua New Guinea it grows well from sea level up to 1600 m and occurs up to 1900 m. In Nepal it grows up to 1400 m altitude. It is killed by frost. They fruit better where there is a cooler season. Temperatures near 30°C give best production. They are very widely distributed in open places and secondary forests throughout the islands of the Philippines and Papua New Guinea and can become weedy under some conditions. They produce better in soils with good organic matter. They prefer a well drained soil but can stand some water-logging. A pH of 5 to 7 is suitable. It can tolerate a pH from 4.6-8.9. Trees cannot tolerate salty conditions. It does not do well on atolls. It can grow in arid places. An annual rainfall between 1,000-2,000 mm is best. It grows in Miombo woodland in Africa. It suits hardiness zones 9-12. In Sichuan and Yunnan.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

They are mostly grown from seeds but seedling trees vary in quality. Seeds remain viable for a year or longer. Seeds germinate in 2-3 weeks but can take 8 weeks. Selected trees can be propagated by budding or grafting. They can also be propagated by layering, root cuttings or stem cuttings if hormones are used. For stem cuttings the tips are used and grown under mist at 28-30°C with bottom heat. Suckers can also be used. Using vegetative methods of propagation enables better fruit kinds to be preserved. In the lowland tropics trees are self sown. As fruit are produced on new season's growth, pruning does not affect fruiting greatly. Trees should be managed to give the maximum number of new vigorous new shoots. Trees can be pruned for shape. Trees can be grown at 2.5 m within rows and 6 m apart between rows. It does not grow or produce well on atolls.

Harvesting and Seed Production

Seedling trees may begin to bear 2-3 years after transplanting. Pruning back the tips slightly increases fruit production. Fruit taste best if ripened on the tree. Ripening can be hastened by placing them in a brown paper bag with a banana or apple. Mature fruit which have not changed colour can be stored 2-5 weeks at temperatures of 8-10°C and relative humidity of 85-95%. Mature fruit ripen in 2-3 days at normal temperatures and will keep for 7 days.

NOTES

Plants can become feral and invasive in some locations mainly in the Pacific. There are about 150 *Psidium* species.

Fruit are high in folates 46µg/100.

PICTURES



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)

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