

# Psidium guajava

*Myrtaceae*

Tropical America

Ar: *Juafa*

Bl: *Zeitun*

Eng: *Guava*

Km: *Lila*

Nr: *Zeitun*

Sh: *Zeitun*

Tg: *Zeitun*

Tr: *Zeitun*

**Ecology:** Originally from South America, this fruit tree is now grown throughout the tropics, the warmer sub-tropics and all over Africa south of the Sahara, 0-2,000 m. It is drought-hardy, grows well with irrigation but not in waterlogged soils. In Eritrea, it is cultivated along the Anseba river, around Elabered, Durfo, Filfil, Mai-aini and on the Ala plains in irrigated fields and in home gardens, 1,200-2,000 m.

**Uses:** Firewood, tool handles, **food** (fruit).

**Description:** A small evergreen tree to 8 m, branching irregularly. **BARK:** Smooth, pale brown, later peeling and flaking; **young shoots 4-sided.** **LEAVES:** Large, **dull and oval to 15 cm long**, side veins prominently hairy below, in opposite pairs. **FLOWERS:** White, about 2.5 cm across, 1-3 together beside leaves, many stamens. **FRUIT:** Rounded to 6 cm long, **tipped by remains of calyx, pink, white, or yellow**, depending on the variety. The **sweet flesh** surrounds many hard angular seeds.

**Propagation:** Seedlings, root suckers, direct sowing, wildings.

**Seed:** No. of seed per kg: about 500,000.

**treatment:** Not necessary.

**storage:** Can be stored in air-tight containers.

**Management:** Fast growing; pollarding, lopping, pruning, coppicing. Prune branches and roots if near crops.

**Remarks:** The fruit is very rich in vitamin C, but often attacked by fruit flies. Trees bear fruit in 3-4 years, continue to fruit for up to 30 years and are a useful source of cash for farmers. The wood is termite-resistant. The leaves do not decompose easily and trees should be planted away from crops to avoid competition.

