

# *Psidium guajava*

Myrtaceae

## Tropical America

**Am:** *Zeituna*

**Eng:** *Guava*

## Ecology

A fruit tree that originates from South America, probably Brazil, but is now grown throughout the tropics. In Ethiopia it is planted in Moist and Wet Weyna Dega and Kolla agroclimatic zones in Shoa, Harerge, Bale, Ilubabor and Kefa, 1,200–2400 m. It is drought hardy, grows well with irrigation, but will not grow in waterlogged soils.

## 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 four-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, wildings, direct sowing at site, root suckers, root cuttings, air layering, grafting. Guava grown for processing may be propagated by seed; about 70% of seedlings retain the general characteristics of the mother tree. Guava grown for fresh fruit should be vegetatively (clonally) propagated. Air layering is possible, but for larger numbers shield or patch budding or grafting onto seedling rootstocks is recommended.

## Seed:

**Treatment:** About 500,000 seed per kg.

**Storage:** Can be stored.

## Management

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

## Remarks

The fruit is often attacked by fruit fly. It is rich in vitamin C. The leaves do not decompose easily to add organic matter to the soil. The fruit is a useful source of money for farmers. Trees bear fruit in 3–4 years and continue to fruit for up to 30 years. The wood is termite resistant.

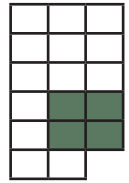




Photo: Patrick Maundu

