



**Strawberry Guava**

*Psidium cattleianum* Sabine  
Myrtle family (Myrtaceae)

**NATIVE RANGE**

Atlantic Coast of Brazil.

**DESCRIPTION**

Strawberry guava, also called purple guava and pineapple guava, is a shrub or small tree reaching up to 15 feet in height. It has a smooth trunk and dark green, shiny, egg-shaped leaves that are arranged oppositely on the stem. The aromatic leaves are 2-4 inches long and 1-2 inches wide. Strawberry guava flowers are white with numerous stamens (pollen-bearing structures) and the edible purple fruits are about the size of a golf ball. Some forms of this species have yellow fruits.



**ECOLOGICAL THREAT**

Strawberry guava is a very serious, habitat-altering pest in many parks and preserves in Hawaii where it poses a major threat to Hawaii's rare endemic flora and fauna. It forms shade-casting thickets with dense mats of surface feeder roots that make it difficult for other species to coexist. Characteristics that promote strawberry guava's success as an invader include its prolific fruiting and aggressive vegetative growth, its tolerance of shade and heavy leaf litter, and possibly through production of toxic chemicals in its leaves that prevent the growth of other plant species.

**DISTRIBUTION IN THE UNITED STATES**

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Strawberry guava occurs on the six largest Hawaiian islands and in subtropical Florida.



**HABITAT IN THE UNITED STATES**

Strawberry guava exhibits broad environmental tolerances, occurring in dry to moist forests, and in tropical and subtropical climates. It occurs in disturbed areas and along roadsides and may invade undisturbed, intact forests. On the Hawaiian islands, strawberry guava infests moist, lowland and submontane forests, usually dominated by 'ohi'a trees (*Metrosideros polymorpha*). In Hawaii, this species is often found in sites disturbed by feral pigs.

**BACKGROUND**

Originally introduced to Hawaii in the early nineteenth century for its edible fruit, strawberry guava quickly escaped cultivation. It is now widely cultivated and naturalized outside its native range and is found in many tropical regions of the world.

**BIOLOGY & SPREAD**

Regeneration of strawberry guava is by seed and by root sprouts, which allow it to undergo expansive vegetative reproduction. Strawberry guava produces an abundance of fruits, the seeds of which are dispersed by birds and feral pigs.

**MANAGEMENT OPTIONS**

Because of the huge quantities of seed that are dispersed by feral pigs, another exotic invasive species, feral pig management is a practical and



necessary first step in strawberry guava management. Pig control must be followed by manual, mechanical, or chemical control measures. These methods have proven successful when tested on a small scale. Reinfestation by strawberry guava is low in pig-free, intact forests.

### **Biological**

No biological control agents are currently available for management of strawberry guava.

**USE PESTICIDES WISELY:** Always read the entire pesticide label carefully, follow all mixing and application instructions and wear all recommended personal protective gear and clothing. Contact your state department of agriculture for any additional pesticide use requirements, restrictions or recommendations.

**NOTICE:** mention of pesticide products on this page does not constitute endorsement of any material.

For more information on strawberry guava management, please contact:

- Alyssa Zahorcak, ajzeco96 at worldnet.att.net
- Dick Roberts, Florida Park Service, District 5 Admin, 13798 SE Federal Hwy., Hobe Sound, FL 33455

### **OTHER LINKS**

- [http://www.hear.org/starr/hiplants/images/thumbnails/html/psidium\\_cattleianum.htm](http://www.hear.org/starr/hiplants/images/thumbnails/html/psidium_cattleianum.htm)

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### **PHOTOGRAPHS**

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Jacobi, J.D. and F.R. Warshauer. 1992. The current and potential distribution of six introduced plant species in upland habitats on the island of Hawaii. In C.P. Stone, C.W. Smith, and J.T. Tunison (eds.), *Alien Plant Invasions in Native Ecosystems of Hawai'i: Management and Research*. Univ. Hawaii Coop. Natl. Park Resour. Studies Unit. Univ. Hawaii Press, Honolulu.

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