

## Cattley (Strawberry) Guava, Feijoa (Pineapple Guava) & Tropical Guava

### Cattley Guava (Strawberry Guava)

*Psidium cattleianum*, (aka *P. littorale*; *P. chinense*)

Native to the lowlands of eastern Brazil, cattley guava is an outstanding evergreen hedge plant for central Florida because it is cold hardy to about 22-24° F and has good salt tolerance. Bushes grow moderately slow to 15x15 feet. The plant prefers full sun and tolerates poor, even alkaline, soils, but will produce more if grown on good soil and mulched. Young plants require regular moisture. It tolerates a high water table, but may be killed by flooding. Grown from seed, cattley guava usually is true to type. Red fruit cattley guava tends to be a compact, bushy shrub whereas the yellow has a more upright and open growth habit. Both also make



very nice container plants and will bear heavily in a pot. Both kinds flourish in full sun.

Fruit season is from June to August. The yellow fruit are larger and sweeter than the red. Both fruits are about one inch long and are aromatic, spicy, sub-acidic, and strawberry-like. Red-skinned fruits have white flesh more or less reddish near the skin. Yellow-skinned fruits have faintly yellowish flesh. In both types, the flesh is aromatic and surrounds the central juicy, somewhat translucent pulp filled with hard, flattened-triangular seeds.

### Feijoa (Pineapple Guava)

*Feijoa sellowiana*

Feijoa is a slow-growing, bushy evergreen shrub that can be trained to a small tree with a single trunk, espaliered, or pruned to form a dense hedge or screen. Without any pruning, the shrub may reach 15x15 feet. They respond well to pruning, however, and can easily be shaped to any desired form. They make an excellent hedge. Feijoa takes full sun to part shade and will thrive with little care in most well-drained soils. They are hardy to 10°F and are very salt tolerant. To produce fruit, feijoas need 100-200 chilling hours below 45°F, so they will only produce fruit after cooler winters in central Florida. Heat stress in the summer may cause them to drop fruit prematurely. They rarely have any disease or pest problems, don't need much fertilizer and usually don't need supplemental watering except in drought conditions.

The edible flowers are very attractive, about an inch cross with white petals and showy scarlet stamens. The edible fruits are round or egg-shaped, 1-3 inches long, with waxy blue-green or gray-green skins and juicy greenish white pulp. In Florida, they harvest from August-October. The fleshy white flower petals are sweet and can be added to salads. Pluck them carefully and the fruits will still develop. The fruit emits a strong long-lasting perfume, even before it is fully ripe. The thick, white, granular, watery flesh of the fruit has a delicious minty-pineapple or pineapple and strawberry flavor. The fruits are usually eaten by cutting them in half and scooping out the pulp with a spoon. They will drop when ripe, but you can pick them a little sooner and let them ripen in the kitchen. The feijoa is native to subtropical Paraguay, Uruguay, northern Argentina and southern Brazil.



### Guava, Tropical

*Psidium guajava*

Guavas are among the most versatile of fruit trees. Probably native to southern Mexico and northern Central America, they are now found all over the world and thrive in both dry and humid climates, at high or low altitudes, in heavy clay, marl, light sand, gravel bars near streams, or on limestone; and tolerating a pH range from 4.5 to 9.4!

They grow rapidly into a large evergreen bush or small open tree to about 15 x 15 feet, although in ideal locations, trees can grow as high as 30 feet. They have fair salt tolerance. Guava trees tolerate fairly wet soils and some flooding. They are even quite drought tolerant. They can be frozen back by low temperatures of 25-28°F but usually re-sprout and may begin producing again in about a year. Older trees, killed to the ground, have sent up new shoots which fruited 2 years later. Guavas grow in full sun to full shade, though fruit production decreases in less light. With the exception of the 'Indonesian Seedless,' guavas can be "bush pruned." All guavas can also be container-grown. Fruit flies and whiteflies are common pests.



Pruning trees improves the shape of the plant and will help them produce larger fruit and a heavier crop. Fruit ripens between July and September. When immature and until a very short time before ripening, the fruit is green, hard and very astringent. With the exception of the 'Vietnam,' which is picked and eaten green, guavas are yellow-skinned, though the flesh of ripe fruit may be white, pink, yellow, or red depending on variety.

Guava fruits are highly nutritious. They are especially rich in vitamin C. Some varieties have five times the vitamin C as fresh orange juice. The fruit can be eaten fresh, made into a refreshing drink, or processed in many other ways. The entire fruit can be used, the hard small seeds eaten right along with the pulp. There are jelly guavas, which contain enough natural pectin for making jelly, and sweet guavas. It is probably native to southern Mexico and northern Central America.

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## Varieties

- 'Barbie Pink' - Rated as one of the best guavas and planted all over the world, this variety was developed by Hopkins Tropical Nursery and named after Barbara Hopkins. Flowers are sweetly aromatic and fruit is large with a slight pear to oval shape with light pink flesh. Seed count is small relative to the size of the fruit.

- 'Indian Red' – Fruit has a strong aroma, of medium to large size and pear-shaped. The yellow skin often develops a pink blush when ripe. The red flesh is medium thick and has a sweet flavor. Seeds are numerous but small. The tree is fairly productive in fall and early winter.

- 'Indonesian Seedless' – While most guava trees are rounded, the Indonesian is more columnar in form. There is also little uniformity to the fruit size of this variety. The small to large fruit are also of irregular shape. The seed section, however, is very small (about ¼ inch), and only rarely contains seed. The fruit has a pleasing pear-like flavor and texture.

- 'Peruvian White' – . This variety is one of the best white fleshed guavas. It produces a medium-sized rounded fruit. The tasty fruit is very aromatic and pleasing to the senses. The fast growing plant generally produces in 2-3 years.

- 'Redland' – This medium-sized fruit looks like a Bartlett pear when fully ripe. It has pink flesh and a good number of seeds. It is high in pectin and excellent for making jellies. It has the strongest "guava" flavor of all the guavas.

- 'Ruby Supreme' - 'Ruby Supreme' - Ruby Supreme is one the sweetest guavas. The fruit is red fleshed, medium-sized and rounded. The tree generally bears delicious fruit after two years.

- 'Tikal' - This very nice fruit is rounded and has deep pink to almost red flesh. The sweet fruit has a smooth texture and a pleasing flavor that is not overpowering. It has a relatively small seed cavity.

- 'Tropical' – These all produce good fruit, but they vary in size, shape, flesh color and taste because they are seedlings resulting from new crosses between guava hybrids.

- 'Vietnam' – This large fruit has an almost apple-like crunchy texture. The fruit is large and sweet, but must be eaten green. It has a small seed count relative to the size of the fruit.

## Planting Instructions

Prepare the soil by adding 1 part organic matter—such as our **Rockledge Gardens Planting Mix**—to 1 to 2 parts existing soil (use more Planting Mix in sandier soil). Use this mix to backfill the hole. Add a few cups of **Espoma Citrus-Tone** and some **Bio-Tone Starter Plus** (see directions) when planting. Work these into the soil alongside of the rootball while planting and sprinkle some on the surface. Reapply Citrus-Tone around the tree surface every 2 months. These organic products will serve to stimulate root growth for quicker establishment.

The planting hole should be wider—but no deeper—than the rootball. When planted, the tree should be no lower in the ground than it was in the pot. If higher (recommended for poor draining areas), it should be bermed up gradually.

When removing the tree from the container, use care: do this right next to the hole you have just prepared. Examine the tree roots closely for injury. If any of the roots are crushed or broken, cut them at a point just inside of the injury. If there are roots encircling more than one-third of the root ball, cut these by making 3 vertical cuts spaced equally around the rootball. This will not harm the tree if it is properly watered. Prune any broken branches just beyond the branch collar. Before planting, scrape a small amount of soil and root hairs away from the sides of the tree. If some of the dirt should fall off of the rootball, don't panic! Carefully place the tree into the hole and backfill with your mixture.

Gently place the tree into the hole, again checking that the soil at the top of the root ball is level with the soil in your yard. Fill in the sides of the hole around the rootball and gently firm the soil mixture around the base of the tree.

Eliminate air pockets by using a gentle stream of water from a hose. Form a ridge or berm of soil 2 to 3 inches high around the margin of the hole to serve as a reservoir when watering. This berm should have a diameter a little wider than the pot the tree was growing in.

## Watering

When temperatures are hot, water your tree daily for the first two weeks by filling the water reservoir (or use two gallons of water per inch of trunk diameter). In cooler weather, water every other day. Weeks 3 and 4, water every other day (twice a week in cooler weather). Continue reducing in two-week stages until you're applying water only once per week.

During the dry season and periods of drought, you should supply even mature trees with an inch of water weekly in warm weather (every two weeks in cooler weather).

## Maintenance

Guava is easy to grow, and requires little maintenance to become a healthy, happy tree. Fruit size and quality depends to a large extent on proper nourishment and an adequate water supply at the time of fruit development. A month after planting, begin feeding with **Sunniland Citrus Fertilizer**. Start with no more than 1/4 pound at monthly or bi-monthly intervals, increasing the rates in line with plant growth (see bag instructions). To supply necessary minor elements, **Citrus Nutritional Spray** should also be applied as needed. We also strongly recommend spraying citrus trees often with **Maxicrop Liquid Seaweed**, especially in February and November, to boost the immune system of the tree. Liquid Seaweed and Citrus Nutritional Spray can be applied together. There are no serious pest or disease problems with these fruits other than the Caribbean fruit fly.

