

NZ Myrtaceae Key - Online edition

Psidium guajava L.

Common Names

apple guava, common guava, guava, pear guava, tropical guava, yellow guava

Origin

This species has been cultivated for a long period of time and its exact indigenous range is therefore somewhat obscure. Thought to be indigenous to Mexico, Central America, the Caribbean and tropical South America.

Cultivation

Psidium guajava is widely cultivated as a fruit tree and garden ornamental in the warmer parts of the world. Cultivated at warm garden sites in northern New Zealand.

Distribution

New Zealand records and observations are confined to Bay of Plenty and northwards to Auckland and Northland.

Distinguishing Features

- Bark reddish-brown, peeling off in flakes.
- Leaves with 10–20 pairs of prominent side veins.
- Leaf base rounded.
- Fruit yellow, round to pear-shaped, topped by the remains of persistent sepals.

Habit

Tree or single to multi-stemmed shrub 1–3 m tall.

Bark and Stem/Trunk

Bark reddish-brown, smooth, peeling off in flakes. Stems and branchlets 4-angled, hairy.

Leaves

Leaves opposite, elliptic (oval), dull green, leaf surface flat, not puckered, 70–150 mm long, 30–70 mm wide, juvenile leaves densely hairy all over, upper surface becoming hairless with age, lower surface remaining hairy, especially along midveins and side veins, midvein and side veins raised, side veins 10–20; margins entire; tips rounded or pointed; leaf bases rounded; leaf stalks 4–10 mm long.

Flowers

Flowers mostly solitary, in leaf forks, \pm 30 mm in diam., flower stalks \pm 15 mm long, petals 4–5, oval, white or occasionally pink; sepals 4–5, tips free, persistent, hairy; stamens white or occasionally pink, protruding from flower. Main flowering period: spring and summer.

Fruit

Fruit yellow-skinned when ripe, round, egg- or pear-shaped berry, 4–5-locular, \pm 25–60 mm wide, with sweet pink flesh.

Similar Species

In the context of New Zealand, *P. guajava* is similar to *P. cattleianum*, but the former possesses hairy, 4-angled branchlets, leaves with 10–20 paired side veins, leaf bases rounded and fruit that mature from green to yellowish, as opposed to hairless and rounded branchlets, leaves with 6–7 paired side veins, leaf bases gradually tapering to the stalk and smaller purplish-red (but sometimes yellow) fruit.

Plants with overall pinkish pigments, showing in foliage, flowers and fruit, are present in New Zealand.

Notes

Psidium guajava is listed as a DOC Environmental Weed and a Regional Pest Management Strategy species in New Zealand. It is also listed as an international invasive species by the Centre for Agriculture and Bioscience International's (CABI) Invasive Species Compendium (ISC).

Psidium is a genus of about 100 species indigenous to tropical America.

External Links

- Australian Tropical Rainforest Plants
- Flora of New Zealand Online (species profile)
- Flora of New Zealand Online (weed profile)
- GBIF
- iNaturalist NZ
- NZPCN
- PlantNET: New South Wales Flora Online

- Weeds of Australia: Biosecurity Queensland

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