

Strawberry guava

Psidium cattleianum Sabine

Myrtle family (Myrtaceae)

Post-Cook introduction

Small evergreen tree or shrub planted for its round or elliptical dark reddish purple or yellow edible fruits and widely naturalized and forming thickets in lowland areas. Becoming 20–50 ft (6–15 m) high, with slightly angled trunk 4–12 inches (0.1–0.3 m) in diameter. Bark gray or light brown, smooth, peeling off and exposing light greenish brown inner layers. Inner bark light pink, bitter and astringent. Twigs brown, hairless.

Leaves paired (opposite), hairless, leafstalks green, $\frac{1}{4}$ – $\frac{1}{2}$ inch (6–13 mm) long. Blades elliptical, $1\frac{1}{2}$ – $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches (4–9 cm) long, and 1 – $1\frac{3}{4}$ inches (2.5–4.5 cm) wide, short-pointed at apex, broadest beyond middle, and tapering to long-pointed base, slightly thick and leathery and turned under at edges, above shiny dark green with inconspicuous veins, beneath dull light green with tiny gland-dots.

Flowers 1–2 on short stalks at leaf bases, white, less than 1 inch (2.5 cm) across, composed of greenish conical base (hypanthium) less than $\frac{1}{4}$ inch (6 mm) long, 4–5 rounded green calyx lobes that remain at top of fruit, 4–5 elliptical white petals, many threadlike white stamens, and pistil with inferior ovary and slender style.

Fruits (berries) 1–2 on slender stalks at leaf bases or back of leaves, round or elliptical, 1 – $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches (2.5–4 cm) long, dark reddish purple or sometimes yellow, with 4 rounded thick calyx lobes $\frac{1}{4}$ inch (6 mm) long at apex, thick-walled, pinkish or whitish, juicy, slightly sour to sweet edible pulp, aromatic. Seeds many, rounded or elliptical, $\frac{3}{16}$ inch (5 mm) long, hard, light brown or yellow.

Sapwood is yellowish white and heartwood pale reddish brown. A fine-textured, moderately heavy wood used only for fuelwood in Hawaii.

Fruits are eaten raw or made into jam or jelly with strawberry flavor. One variety of larger size with large yellow fruits is called yellow strawberry guava.

Introduced into Hawaii in 1825 for the edible fruit, but now thoroughly naturalized and established. It forms thickets in moist lowland areas up to about 2500 ft (762 m) elevation, rarely to 4,000 ft (1,220 m). Classed as a weed in pastures, rangelands, and waste places. Grown also in southern California and Florida.

Special areas

Waimea Arboretum, Wahiawa, Tantalus, Aiea, Kalopa, Pepeekeo

Range

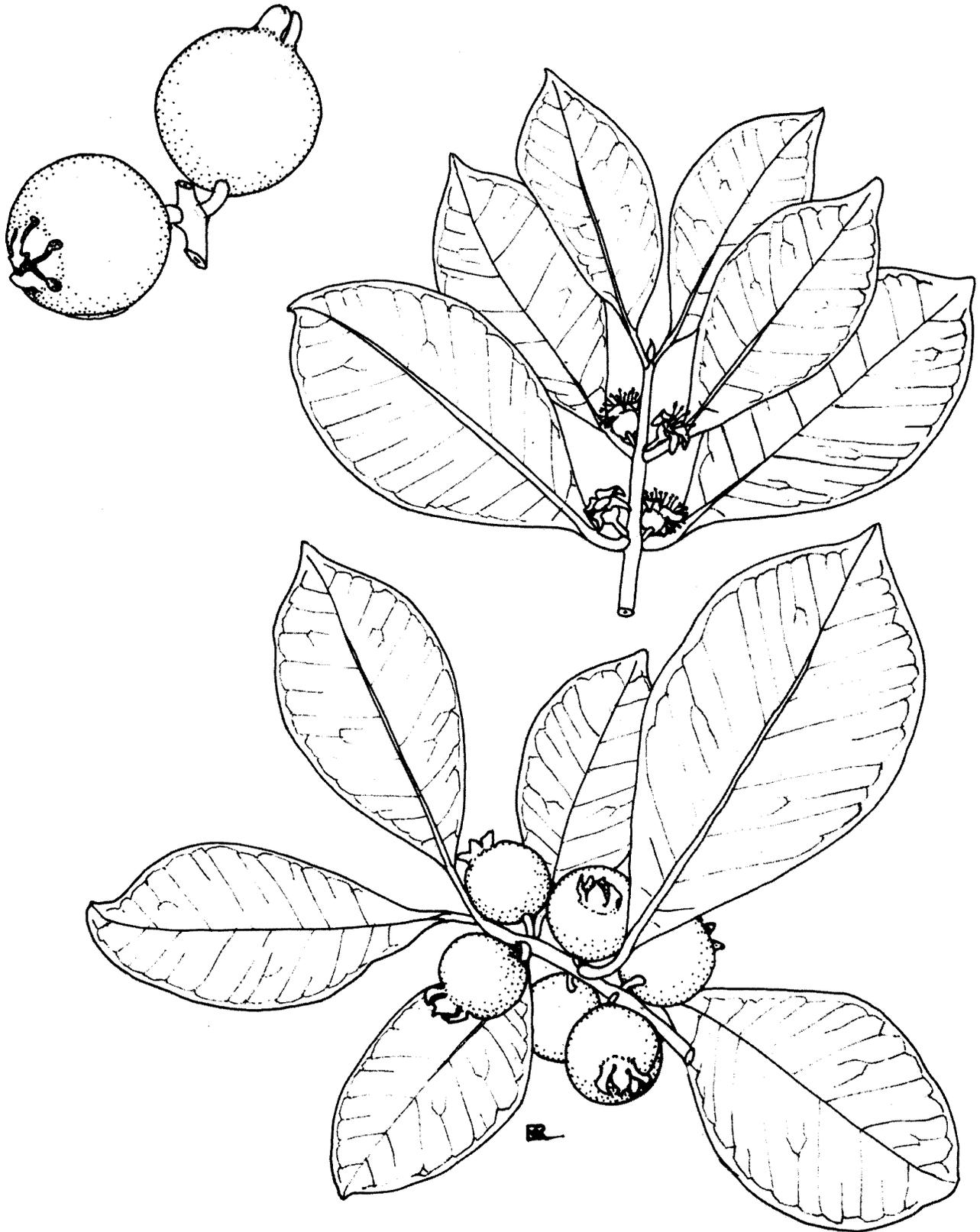
Native of Brazil

Other common names

purple strawberry guava, Cattley guava, waiawi

Botanical synonym

Psidium littorale Raddi



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Fruits (upper left), flowering twig (upper right), and fruiting twig (below), 1 X.