

PSIDIUM CATTLEIANUM SABINE

Myrtaceae/Myrtle Family

Common Names: Strawberry guava, Cattley guava
Synonymy: *Psidium littorale* Raddi var. *longipes* (O. Berg) Fosb.
Origin: Brazil

Botanical Description: Evergreen shrub or small tree to 8 m (25 ft) tall, with gray to reddish-brown peeling bark and young branches round, pubescent. Leaves opposite, simple, entire, glabrous, elliptic to oblong, to 8 cm (3 in) long. Flowers to 2.5 cm (1.2 in) wide, borne singly at leaf axils, with white petals and a mass of white and yellow stamens. Fruit a globose berry, 3-6 cm (1.2-2.4 in) long, purple-red, with whitish flesh usually sweet-tasting when ripe; seeds numerous.

NOTE: May be confused with the common guava (*P. guajava*, on following pages), which has 4-angled branches and larger leaves with the veins prominently raised below.

Ecological Significance: Introduced to Florida in the 1880s for ornament and as a fruit crop (Gordon and Thomas 1997), and since planted extensively (Watkins 1970, Broschat and Meerow 1991). Noted as “often growing wild” by 1950s (Barrett 1956). Forms thickets and shades out native vegetation in forests and open woodlands (Cronk and Fuller 1995). Has had catastrophic effect on native habitats of Mauritius, and considered the worst pest plant in Hawaii, where it has invaded a variety of natural areas (Cronk and Fuller 1995). Has become dominant in some native forests of Hawaii, including in 2 national parks, where its clonal spread is enhanced by activities of feral pigs (Huenneke and Vitousek 1990). Reported from Florida parks and preserves in Pinellas, Hillsborough, Martin, and Palm Beach counties (EPPC 1996). Along with the common guava and the Surinam cherry, also serves as a major host for the naturalized Caribbean fruit fly, *Anastrepha suspensa* (Loew), which occasionally spreads to commercial citrus crops (Nguyen *et al.* 1993).

KAL



Young stem

STRAWBERRY GUAVA

Distribution: Native to Brazil, naturalized in Florida, Hawaii, tropical Polynesia, Norfolk Island, and Mauritius (Cronk and Fuller 1995). Naturalized across peninsular Florida, with herbarium specimens documented from Seminole, Orange, Osceola, Pinellas, Hillsborough, Indian River, St. Lucie, Martin, Highlands, Glades, Hardee, and DeSoto counties (Wunderlin *et al.* 1995).

Life History: Grows rapidly, tolerates shade, and produces root suckers (Cronk and Fuller 1995). Root-suckering ability important to its dominance in natural habitats (Huenneke and Vitousek 1990). Has good salt tolerance (Maxwell and Maxwell 1961). Flowers and fruits all year (Wunderlin 1982). Has high seed production, early seed maturity, and seed dispersal by both birds and mammals (Cronk and Fuller 1995).

AF



Bark

KAL



Immature fruits