

Purple guava

Psidium cattleianum

Family

Myrtaceae (myrtle)

Also known as

Strawberry guava

Where is it originally from?

Brazil

What does it look like?

Large shrub or small tree (<6 m) with smooth, pale brown trunk and shoots covered with thick, fine hairs when young. Hairless oval leaves (40-80 x 25-45 mm) are in opposite pairs on the stem, glossy and dark green above, and dotted with glands beneath. Solitary white flowers (to 10 mm diameter) are usually produced in all upper leaf bases (Jun-Mar), followed by round, berry-like fruits (<2 cm diameter) that have sweet, purple (occasionally whitish) flesh that becomes dark purple as they mature. Each fruit contains numerous seeds.

Are there any similar species?

Yellow guava (*Psidium guajava*) has larger leaves which are densely hairy when young, and yellow fruit (3-4 cm diameter) with sweet pink flesh.

Why is it weedy?

Massive seeding ability and seeds are well dispersed. Forms a dense root mat. Tolerates shade, heat, high to moderately low rainfall, wind and salt, but is intolerant of frost.

How does it spread?

Birds, possums, pigs and other livestock all spread the seed. Common seed sources include gardens and old orchards.

What damage does it do?

Forms dense or pure stands in open area and under bush canopy, preventing the establishment of native plant seedlings, taking over native forest areas. Potentially a major weed in New Zealand.

Which habitats is it likely to invade?

Most forest and shrubland types in warmest northern areas and islands.

What can I do to get rid of it?

1. Pull or dig out small plants. Leave on site to rot down.
2. Cut down and paint stump (all year round): metsulfuron-methyl 600g/kg (1g/L).
3. Cut and squirt (all year round): Make 1 cut every 100 mm around trunk. Apply 1g metsulfuron-methyl 600g/kg (made to a paste) or 10ml of a product containing 100g picloram+300g triclopyr/L (undiluted) or 10ml triclopyr 600 EC (undiluted) to each cut.
4. Spray (all year round): metsulfuron-methyl 600g/kg (5g/10L + penetrant) or a product containing 100g picloram+300g triclopyr/L (30ml/10L).

CAUTION: When using any herbicide or pesticide, PLEASE READ THE LABEL THOROUGHLY to ensure that all instructions and directions for the purchase, use and storage of the product, are followed and adhered to.

What can I do to stop it coming back?

Stumps resprout, reseeds profusely in bared areas. Follow up for seedlings 2-3 times each year until eradicated. Control possums and pigs. Do not replant sites until clear.



www.weedbusters.org.nz



Photo: Carolyn Lewis



Photo: Trevor James



Photo: Trevor James