

COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE
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COLLEGE OF TROPICAL AGRICULTURE AND HUMAN RESOURCES
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1420 Lower Campus Road
Honolulu, HI 96822

Horticulture - Oahu County Leaflet No. 13

Slightly Revised February 1986

GUAVAS FOR THE HOME GARDEN

Guavas is one of the easiest fruit trees to grow in our Hawaiian islands. They require minimum care in our sub-tropical climate. Guavas, which are high in vitamin C, are widely accepted by many in making jams, jellies, nectars and juices.

Varieties

The processing type guavas, such as 'Beaumont' (B-30) and 'Ka hua kula' (No. 097) are large fruited, thick fleshed cultivars with high yielding capabilities. The less tart and sweeter cultivars are 'Hong Kong Pink' and 'Indonesian Seedless' (white flesh). These are ideal for fresh fruit consumption. The demand for the dessert cultivars has been so small that nurseries in Hawaii seldom propagate them.

Soil Preparation and Fertilization

The guava is adaptable over a wide range of soil types and conditions. It will tolerate heavy clay soils and also rocky soil conditions, the latter requiring more frequent irrigation and fertilization. Guavas grow satisfactorily in acid to a slightly alkaline soil with optimum pH levels ranging between 5.0 to 7.0.

Work the soil, about two feet square, to break up any hardpan, and work in manure and compost to a depth of 8-12 inches. A handful of treble superphosphate fertilizer prior to planting is recommended. A general garden fertilizer, such as 16-16-16 or 10-10-10 type fertilizer, may be applied at least 3 times per year for the first three years. After the third year, a fertilizer such as 10-20-20 may be applied and the amount per application should be increased. Water soil immediately after fertilizer application.

Planting and Pruning

Guavas can be propagated from air layering, cuttings, grafting, budding, and from seeds. Seeds are, however, highly variable. In planting, properly stake the plant and keep the soil moist until the plant begins to grow. Guavas may be planted 10-15 feet apart.

Guavas will tolerate close planting practices since they lend themselves well to pruning. Selective pruning hastens flowering and fruiting by promoting vigorous flushes of new growth which bears large fruits. Also, harvesting seasons can be determined by selective pruning.

Irrigation

Irrigate regularly and whenever needed to prevent plants from wilting. Allowing plants to wilt may cause delay in maturity and lowers yield. Water availability is the most important factor affecting yield. About 3 to 5 acre inch of water is recommended per month.

Pest Management

Thrips and fruit flies are the most common insect pests found on guavas, mainly affecting the fruits. Periodic spraying with an insecticide such as malathion should control these insects. Scales, whiteflies, and mealy bugs may be controlled by using petroleum oils. Sulfur sprays have been effective on some mites. (Caution: Do not spray sulfur and oil within 30 days of each other.)

Harvesting

The normal guava harvesting season is from late August to October and possibly again in January to March. Fruit production begins from the third year from planting. Harvesting is primarily done by hand picking, selecting firm yellow and mature guavas. Half ripe fruits may be stored at 40-45°F. for several days.

H. DALE SATO
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"Use pesticide safely. Read and follow the label. Consult Cooperative Extension Service or Department of Agriculture personnel for authorized special local need registrations or additional information. The user is responsible for proper use and application of pesticides as well as storage and disposal."