

Acca sellowiana

[Synonyms : *Feijoa obovata*, *Feijoa schenkiana*, *Feijoa sellowiana*, *Feijoa sellowiana* forma *elongata*, *Orthostemon obovatus*, *Orthostemon sellowana*, *Orthostemon sellowianus*]

FEIJOA (English, French, German, Japanese, Portuguese, Spanish) is an evergreen shrub or tree. Native to northern Argentina, southern Brazil, to Paraguay and to Uruguay, it has crimson and white flowers with long, crimson stamens that are often topped with large grains of yellow pollen.

It is also known as *Akka serowiana* (Japanese), *Ananasguave* (German), *Araçá do Rio Grande* (Brazilian, Portuguese), Brazilian guava, *Falsa guayaba* (Argentinian, Spanish), *Faux goyavier* (French), *Fejchoa sellowova* (Czech, Slovak), *Feijoa serowiana* (Japanese), Fig guava, Fruit salad tree, *Goiaba do campo* (Brazilian, Portuguese), *Goiaba-feijoa* (Portuguese), *Goiaba serrana* (Brazilian, Portuguese), *Goiaba silvestre* (Portuguese), *Goiabeira-serrana* (Portuguese), *Goyave ananas* (French), *Goyave du Brésil* (French), *Goyavier de Montevideo* (French), Guavasteen, *Guayaba chilena* (Mexican, Spanish), *Guayaba del país* (Uruguayan, Spanish), *Guayaba sumina* (Spanish), *Guayabo* (Spanish), *Mirtuszdió* (Hungarian), and Pineapple guava.

The flowers are pollinated by bees (and, incidentally, by birds that relish the flower petals).

Sellowiana commemorates a German botanist Friedrich Sellow or Sello (1789-1831).

commemorates a German botanist and naturalist, Friedrich Sellow or Sello (1789-1831). He started as a gardener then developed his knowledge by working and studying in the Botanical Gardens in Berlin and Paris (*Jardin des Plantes*), as well as travelling in Europe attending lectures and meeting leading botanists. In 1814 he joined an expedition to Brazil which was funded by British botanists. There, recognised for the first time as an official naturalist he made many excursions in Brazil (notably the south) and Uruguay (either alone or as a member of other expeditions) not only of increasing length but also to areas previously unexplored by Europeans. Sellow is said to have collected thousands of botanical, entomological and mineralogical specimens that he sent to botanical gardens in Brazil, England, Germany and Portugal. After his death (he drowned in a river) most of his diaries, drawings and other material eventually found their way to two museums in Berlin, the Museum of Natural History (also known as the Humboldt Museum) and the Ethnological Museum. He discovered the plant when travelling in South America.

The common name Feijoa came into being when the plant was previously a species in the genus *Feijoa* which is believed to celebrate the name of a 19th Century Portuguese botanist, Don Joao da Silva Feijó, who worked in Brazil.

The plant can be found growing untamed on the French Riviera. It was introduced to France from South America in the 1800s by the French landscape architect Edouard Francis André (1840-1911) and those bushes and small trees now found outside cultivation are garden escapes.

It was not until 1901 that feijoa was introduced to California in the southern United States and unsuccessful attempts were made there in the 1920s to grow it on a commercial scale for its fruit. However encouraged by a burgeoning feijoa industry in New Zealand, new efforts to develop a commercial undertaking have been made in California in the late 20th Century.

Feijoa is also grown to provide a windbreak, and hedging or screen.

The fruit, which are egg-shaped and reddish-green, are claimed to have a strong, long-lasting pineapple-like scent, and a taste reminiscent of strawberries (*Potentilla*) and pineapples (*Ananas comosus*). They are available in Europe commercially in late Spring and Summer and can be eaten fresh or made into jam. The edible, mildly sweet-tasting flower petals can be added to salads.