

# Physalis peruviana

**Poha,  
cape gooseberry**

*Physalis peruviana* L.

Family: Solanaceae

**Description:** Short-lived perennial to 3 ft tall, semi-woody. Leaves simple, alternate, in pairs at each node, unequal in size, larger 2.4 inches long by 1.6 inches wide, margins somewhat lobed or not. Flowers solitary in leaf axils, bell-shaped, 0.3 inch long, yellow with purplish brown spots at the base of the corolla. Berries 0.5 inches diameter, pale yellow, drying to pale brown, aromatic, covered by papery calyx, used in making jams. Seeds numerous. From the Greek *physis*, bladder, for the calyx covering the fruit; *peruviana*, of Peru<sup>(5, 69, 70)</sup>.

**Distribution:** Native of Peru. Found in mesic to wet forests and disturbed sites on mountain slopes at 1400–6000 ft on all the inhabited islands except Ni‘ihau.



**Environmental impact:** Suspected to cause live-stock poisoning (Burt Smith, Univ. Hawai‘i, retired).

**Management:** Probably susceptible to hormone-type herbicides, especially when young, and probably to tebuthiuron.