

FGCU Food Forest

Plant Database

Fig (*Ficus carica*)

Origin: Eastern Mediterranean region

Description: The bark is a smooth, silvery gray and the 4 in (10 cm) long

Harvest: Twice a year. May/June and

Flower: The flower itself is not visible

Tolerance: Drought tolerant, once established. When fully dormant, fig

low as 10 to 15°F (-9°C).



General Description: *Ficus carica* is a deciduous tree or large shrub, growing to a height of 23-33 feet with smooth white/grey bark. Its fragrant leaves are 4.7–9.8 inches long and 3.9–7.1 inches across, and deeply lobed with three or five lobes. The complex inflorescence consists of a hollow fleshy structure called the syconium, which is lined with numerous unisexual flowers. The flowers cannot be seen outside the syconium.

- **Native Origin:** The fig is believed to be indigenous to Western Asia and to have been distributed by man throughout the Mediterranean area.
- **General History:** While the ancient history of the fig centers around the Mediterranean region, and it is most commonly cultivated in mild-temperate climates, it nevertheless has its place in tropical and subtropical horticulture. Botanically identified as *Ficus carica* L. (family Moraceae), it is unique in a genus embracing perhaps over 1,000 species, mostly giant "rubber trees", and mostly tropical. It is almost universally known simply as fig, common fig, or edible fig.
- **Distribution:** It has been cultivated for thousands of years, remnants of figs having been found in excavations of Neolithic sites traced to at least 5,000 B.C. As time went on, the fig-growing territory stretched from Afghanistan to southern Germany and the Canary Islands. Figs were

introduced into England sometime between 1525 and 1548. It is not clear when the common fig entered China but by 1550 it was reliably reported to be in Chinese gardens. European types were taken to China, Japan, India, South Africa and Australia. The first figs in the New World were planted in Mexico in 1560. Figs were introduced into California when the San Diego Mission was established in 1769. Later, many special varieties were received from Europe and the eastern United States where the fig reached Virginia in 1669. The Smyrna fig was brought to California in 1881-82 but it was not until 1900 that the wasp was introduced to serve as the pollinating agent and make commercial fig culture possible. From Virginia, fig culture spread to the Carolinas, Georgia, Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana and Texas.

- **Season of Harvest:** Two harvests a year: May/June and December/January
- **Culinary Uses:** In warm, humid climates, figs are generally eaten fresh and raw without peeling, and they are often served with cream and sugar. Peeled or unpeeled, the fruits may be merely stewed or cooked in various ways, as in pies, puddings, cakes, bread or other bakery products, or added to ice cream mix. Homeowners preserve the whole fruits in sugar syrup or prepare them as jam, marmalade, or paste. Fig paste (with added wheat and corn flour, whey, syrup, oils and other ingredients) forms the filling for the well-known bakery product, "Fig Newton".

Fig	
Scientific Classification	
Kingdom:	Plantae
(unranked):	Angiosperms
(unranked):	Eudicots
(unranked):	Rosids
Order:	Rosales
Family:	Moraceae
Genus:	<i>Ficus</i>
Species:	<i>F. carica</i>

Sources

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Common_fig
<https://www.hort.purdue.edu/newcrop/morton/fig.html#FoodUses>
<http://mobile.floridata.com/Plants/Moraceae/Ficus%20carica/43>