



Easy Edible

Figs:

General info: Figs (*Ficus carica*) are one of the easiest fruit to grow. They are natives of the Mediterranean region and have been grown for thousands of years. Figs typically perform best when planted in well drained soil and full sun. Some figs have a juvenile period of 3-4 years before they produce a good crop. Figs usually grow to about 15-20 ft. tall and wide and are hardy in zones 7-10.

Landscape uses: Small specimen tree; container tree/border bushes.

Ornamental qualities: Lush, tropical looking leaves; fruit

Planting: Container grown figs do not need to be pruned before planting. Just remove them from the pot and plant. Water thoroughly to settle the dirt around the plant and add mulch or pine straw around the base of the plant. Do not put fertilizer in the hole when planting. Root nematodes can stunt growth on figs, the best way to combat this is to fill around area where planting with rich organic matter which nematodes don't like. Another old fashioned trick is to plant against house where roots can grow under the building where nematodes can't live.

Pruning: Any pruning or thinning should be done during the late winter, after the danger of frost is past. Cut out any dead wood, any branches that interfere with the main stems growth, and any unwanted suckers. Prune back to a bud or branch to avoid bare stubs.

Fertilizing/Watering: In good soil, fig trees should need only minimal fertilizing. Mature plants should be fertilized once a year in the spring. If a fig tree is growing too vigorously and is dropping its fruit before they mature, it may be over-fertilized. Although drought tolerant once established, additional water during extremely dry periods will benefit the plant, especially while setting fruit. Yellowing leaves may indicate drought or too much water.



Varieties:

Black Mission: Medium to large purplish-black fig. The flesh is strawberry colored and ripens Summer to Fall. This is one of the most cultivated figs and considered by many to be the best.

Brown Turkey: Old time favorite with medium to large size fruit. Bell shaped, purplish-brown figs ripen in late summer to early fall. Bears heavily; sometimes two crops a year. Pinkish-amber flesh is very sweet and tender. Excellent for canning, jams, drying or eating fresh. Deeply lobed foliage. Cold hardy variety for the South and up the East Coast. Also good for growing in containers.

Celeste (Malta): Widely planted. Vigorous growers and good fruit bearers. Violet-brown fruit is very sweet, and ripens early in the season. Dependable producer of high-quality small to medium figs. Reddish amber flesh with rich honey-like flavor. Excellent for eating fresh, dried, or in preserves. Well adapted to the South and East Coast.

Italian Black: Heirloom fig grown by the Becnel family in Louisiana for over 100 years. Near-black fruit with bright-red pulp, great for preserves

Ischia: This fig is more bird resistant than others due to it staying green upon ripeness. The flesh is strawberry colored in contrast to the green skin and has excellent flavor.

LSU Purple: This fig is one of the best recent releases. It holds up very well to the south's fluctuating weather; bearing consistently and prolifically.