

Figs



Figs

- One of the most problem-free fruits that can be grown in areas with mild winter
- Believed to be native to western Asia
- Brought to California from Spain in the mid 1700s
- The “fruit” are formed without fertilization (parthenocarpic)
- “Fruit” is actually fleshy stem tissue with no seeds
- Gelatin-like interior is actually unfertilized flower structures

Figs - Climate

- Generally limited to areas where temperatures do not drop below 5 degrees F
- Because of wide swings in winter temperatures, figs commonly suffer mild to severe winter injury in all but the warmest parts of Texas
- Plant in well-drained soil
- They can suffer extensive root damage from root knot nematodes in sandy soils

Figs - Varieties

- Three standard varieties are reliable choices for home or limited commercial production:



Alma



Celeste



Texas Everbearing

Figs - Varieties

- Varieties with an open eye may be susceptible to feeding by the dried fruit beetle or souring when rain enters the interior of the fruit

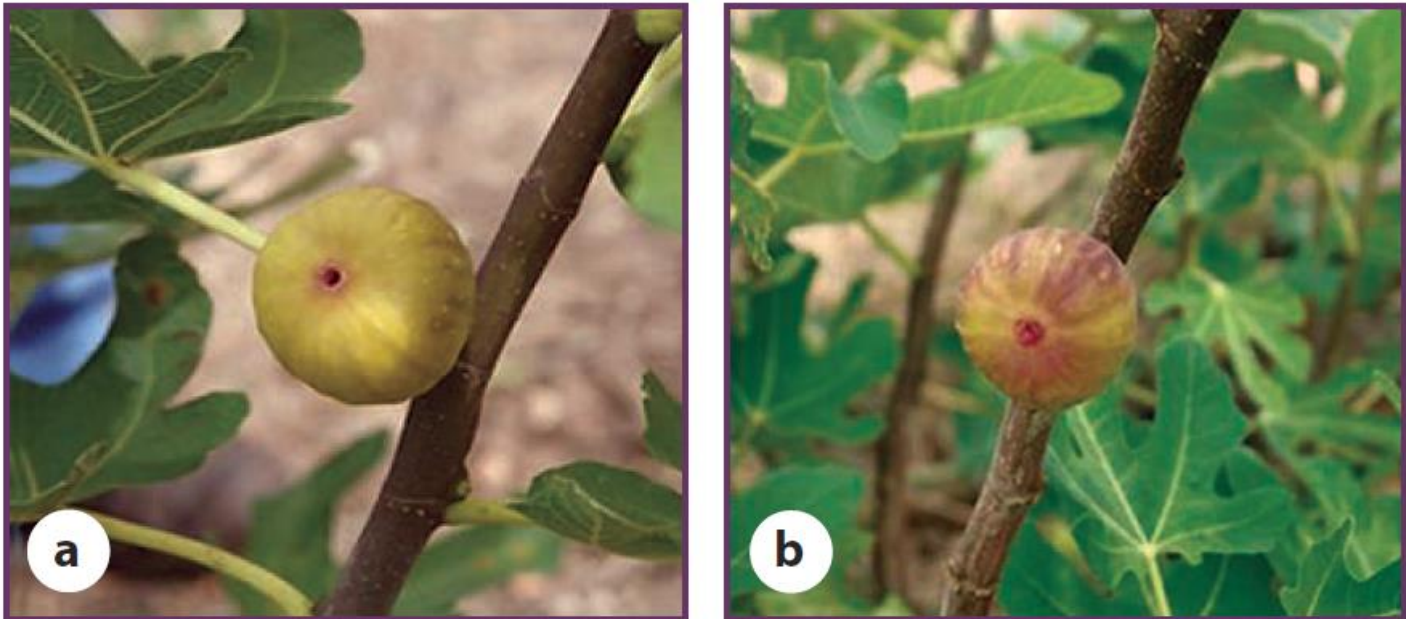


Figure 5. Fig eye characteristics: a) open eye, and b) closed eye

Figs - Propagation

- One of the easiest fruit crops to propagate
- Hardwood cuttings taken when plants are fully dormant will readily root
- Cuttings should be 6 to 10 inches long and about $\frac{1}{2}$ to 1 inch in diameter
- To encourage callus formation, place cuttings in warm, humid environments such as in a moist paper towel placed in a plastic bag for 10 to 14 days
- Plant cuttings in a pot to encourage root and shoot formation

Figs – Site Selection

- Plant in full sun
- It is common to see figs planted on the south or east side of a home or barn to protect from cold winter weather and to make sure that morning sun help the fruit and foliage dry quickly after an evening rain

Figs – Planting and Care

- Plant cuttings in late winter/early spring
- Because trees can reach heights of 20 feet, plant them no closer than 16 feet apart
- Do not fertilize after planting
- Cut back the dormant trunk by about a third at planting to help compensate for root loss
- Mulch after planting

Figs – Pruning and Training

- Commonly grown as multi-trunked plants
- Once shoots are 2 feet high, select 5 or 6 strong shoots and prune the rest out
- To reduce the shock of leaf area loss, consider reducing the number of new shoots over a 2- to 3-week period



Figs – Freeze Protection

- To minimize freeze injury during dry falls and winters, thoroughly water the fig trees a few days before a hard freeze
- Figs can usually tolerate sustained temperatures to 17 degrees F
- Can mound spoiled hay 2 to 3 feet above the ground line for insulation
- Remove hay and use as mulch after risk of spring frost has past

Figs – Diseases

- Greatest disease threat is fig rust
- More severe in rainy areas and seasons
- Infected leaves turn brown and develop orange fruiting structures on the lower part of the leaf
- To control the disease, rake and destroy the infected leaves
- Fig Mosaic Virus can also be a problem



Figs – Insects and Other Pests

- Only insect pest that typically affects quality of ripening figs is the dried fruit beetle
- Root-knot nematodes cause roots to swell or gall



Figs – Harvest

- Figs bear their first crop in late spring
- Many varieties produce a larger crop in late summer through fall
- When frozen to the ground, the fall crop may be smaller, delayed, or in some varieties, absent

