



COMMON FIG



(source: POP)

Latin Name: *Ficus carica*

Recommended Cultivars: Chicago Hardy, Florea, Bethlehem Black, Larchwood, Takoma Violet, Brooklyn White, Fignomenal

Native region: Mediterranean, Middle East, and Asia

Growing Zones: 7-10 (zone 6 with winter protection)

Mature Size: 15-20'

Pollination Requirements: Self-fertile

Light Requirements: Full Sun

Harvest Window: Aug-Oct, depending on variety.

Maintenance Level: Easy

Common Pest and Disease Issues: none

Seasonal Care

WINTER/SPRING: In March or April unwrap fig and prune out all winter-killed branches (red in color). Figs begin to die-back when temperatures get down to around 17 degree F. Figs grow quickly and fruit on new growth, so pruning can actually help increase production. Consider thinning out to a few main stems and heading back to desired height. Pruning too aggressively can delay the onset of fruit.

SUMMER/FALL: Pick figs when they change color and start to soften and/or droop (earlier if squirrels are a problem). After a mild winter or with good protection, some figs will start with an early 'Breba' crop in July. Main crop will often start in August and fruit continuously through October.

LATE FALL: After leaves have dropped, consider wrapping your fig to limit winter die-back, especially for young and/or exposed plants. To prepare it, trim the fig to somewhere under 6' and tie all the branches together. POP's favorite method is to put a 4' wire fence around the tree and stuff it to the top with fall leaves. You can also use old carpets, blankets, or tarps to wrap it. Potted figs can also be brought indoors after leaf drop to an unheated garage, basement, or other cool space for the winter.

Propagation

POP prefers to take cuttings in late fall after leaves have dropped and the trees have gone dormant. Using sharp pruners or loppers, take fig cuttings from last year's growth. They should be about ½ to ¾ inches thick and at 1 foot long or more, with at least 4 nodes. These cuttings are stored in the fridge, wrapped in lightly damp newspaper inside a plastic bag to retain moisture.

In late March, stick the cut ends into moistened potting soil or perlite/vermiculite in a pot and water deeply. Only one node needs to be above the surface of the pot. Keep the potting soil moist and the pot in the shade until rooting is complete. It usually takes a couple weeks for rooting to start and leaves to begin to emerge. It will take a couple of months to get a good mass of roots.