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RHS Journals

The Garden October 2008

Figs in the UK

Figs have an exotic, Mediterranean allure, yet can crop well in Britain.



Fig Choices

Listed below are *Ficus carica* cultivars. 'Brown Turkey', hardy and early-ripening, is the most widely grown in the UK, but there are better-flavoured choices:

- 1 **'Rouge de Bordeaux'** : Purple fruits with red flesh of superb flavour, leaves less lobed than many. Crops twice in a glasshouse.
- 2 **'Tena'** : Small, sweet, yellow fruit. Prefers warmer, drier conditions than in much of the UK.
- 3 **'Black San Pedro'** (usually sold in Europe as San Piero, and sometimes called large Saint Peter fig): Black fruit, sweet red flesh of a good flavour. Makes a good vigorous garden tree.
- 4 **'Alma'** : Light yellow skin, sweet, golden flesh, heavy crops of excellent flavour. Best in the longer growing season of a glass-house to develop the flavour.
- 5 **'Goutte d'Or'** : Golden-yellow with rose flesh. A good historic cultivar for the glasshouse.
- 6 **'Petite Nigra'** : Black skin with strawberry flesh, compact habit, ideal for pot culture. Small fruits.
- 7 **'Black Ischia'** : Often recommended but seldom crops well in the UK. Purple-black fruit, deep red flesh and a rich flavour. There are better alternatives.
- 8 **'Lisa'** : Large, rounded purple-brown fruit with red flesh. Hardy.
- 9 **'LSU Purple'** : A relatively new cultivar (1991) with red-purple skin and red flesh. Smaller fruit than some but

good flavour. Com-pact habit, ideal for containers.

10 'White Marseilles' (syn. 'White Genoa'): Tried-and-tested heritage cultivar producing the best 'white' figs with sweet, juicy, amber flesh. Needs a garden wall or a warm spot in the North.

11 'Brunswick' : Large fruit with pale red flesh. Hardy and reliable with attractive, deeply cut leaves.

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