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Gardening Advice

Figs



Banana Fig.
 Photo by TreeSearch Farms

Figs are easy to grow, and one tree can usually produce enough for an entire family and many friends. Most fig varieties yield two distinct crops of fruit each year. The first crop is produced on the previous year's shoot growth, while the second crop is borne on the leaf axils of the current season's growth. The amount of pruning can affect the quantity of fruit produced, whether first or second crop figs.

Figs can grow very large, 10' or more tall and wide, depending on the variety, or they can be pruned to your desired size. They do not like standing water and produce best in full sun. They do not need a pollinator. Fig trees lose their leaves in fall. They like to be heavily mulched.

Care of Fig Trees

Planting: Plant during the winter when you purchase the tree (January to early July). Plant in full sun with good drainage. Plant to the depth that the tree is in the pot and use existing soil only. Water in well, and water every day for a few days unless it rains.

Pruning: No pruning required, but it is good to prune branches that reach too high in order to develop a more spreading and low tree.

Size of tree: The tree will grow to 10' tall and 10' wide.

Harvesting: As figs grow in size on the tree, look for signs of color change. Then start to taste the fig to see if it is sweet. The time from color change to ripeness is very quick. Harvest early in the morning before the birds get the fruit.

Varieties of Figs for the Houston Area Climate

Banana Fig A medium size yellow fig with pale strawberry flesh. Very sweet, full flavor, no bitterness, closed eye, but will split if not harvested when ripe. Low spreading tree, but can also grow tall, so prune to the size you want. Good production. Good cold tolerance. One of the very best. Grown in Seabrook, Texas since around 1910.

Celeste Fig A small, purple-brown skin, pink flesh, excellent flavor fig, which ripens in mid-June. Celeste fruits have a distinctive closed eye, which is a good fresh eating fig and is excellent for preserving. There is no fig more universally adapted to Texas than the Celeste. This fig is often sold under the name Celestial, Blue Celeste or Sugarfig. The bush is moderately vigorous and very productive. The best for our area. Ripens late May. Very cold hardy.

LSU Purple Fig A medium size purple fig with strawberry pulp and delicious flavor. This is another closed eye fig that is perfect for the Houston area. Ripens after Celeste, so you can have an extended fig production.

LSU Gold Fig Huge bright golden fig with amber flesh that is tender and very sweet. Vigorous grower.

Petite Negra Fig A delicious juicy black skinned red-fleshed closed-eye fig that only grows to a maximum of 8' in full sun. This variety can be grown in a pot. An excellent non-commercial variety.

Mystek Fig A late season green skinned fig with deep raspberry interior that ripens from August to November. Regarded as one of the best by the late Stewart Nagle, Ph.D.

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