

[Invil Villages](#)
[Tourism](#)
[Special products](#)
[Festival](#)
[Home](#) > [Special Product](#) > [Fruit](#) > [Others](#)

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● Heaven's Mysterious Fruit, Figs



■ Understanding Figs

1. Name

가. Scientific Name: *Ficus carica* Linn

나. Korean Name: Muhagwa다.

다. Foreign Names

- ① English: fig
- ② Chinese: 無花果
- ③ German: Feige
- ④ French: figue

2. Origin and History

I. Origin

Figs are included in Moraceae of *Ficus* Linn. *Ficus* Linn plants are classified into 600 species. Some live by shrubs or rocks, but most are tropical evergreens used for decorations or timbers. Only the subtropical fig trees are cultured for fruits, but all of these have milky saps. The origin of figs is Asia Minor's *Carica* and it was named *Ficus Carica* after its origin. Capri is considered as its pre-form naturally grown in southwest Asia (Arabia) and used to be grown in all Mediterranean coasts and islands including

eastern Persia (Iran), Syria and Afganistan. 「Capri」 is thought to have originated from 「Capri Island」 south of Napoli, Italy where fig cultivation has prospered from long time ago. Only this family places the male flower into the chamber to generate fruits. Figs are classified into 4 types of Capri, Smyrna, Common and San Pedro according to the types of flowers and necessity of moistures. The present species has already been produced in Europe since 4 B.C. ~37 B.C.E. II. History1) History in the World Figs have coexisted with the history of mankind with Adam and Eve in the Old Tastament (Genesis 3:7). Also, the Old Tastament (Kings II 20) introduces the medical uses of the figs. Greek and Roman Mythologies already introduced the figs in 8~9 century B.C.

- Greece recorded the difference between wild figs and cultured figs in Plant Book around 372~287 B.C and named and classified many species of figs in Agricultural Principles around 234~149 B.C.
- Italy brought the fig from Greece to prosper their production around 23~79 B.C.E. They widely spread Cutting Propagation with Asexual Propagation. ;
- In Egypt, grapes and figs were widely produced in the Dynasties of 2,200~2,400 B.C.
- The expansion of Arabian powers toward the Centural Europe in Medieval Times brought figs to the Iberian Peninsula of Spain and Portugal. As they were short of the amount of rainfall, they started to produce dried figs early to dominate the western European markets.
- In late 16th century, the Spanish introduced figs to Americas to settle the figs industry with 「Smyrna」 in California. Californian 「Smyrna」 Figs were widely spread to be called Calmyrna Figs and the Californian Black of Common Figs are used for dried and raw fruits in the dry lands of California.
- It is assumed that figs were first introduced in China by Persians in around 8th century. The earliest records of figs in Chinese history are introduced in Hardy Plants Botanical List of King Jujeong (1368 -1393). Today, one kind of Chinese native figs remains and this kind has only a few cut edges on the leaves resembling the native figs of Japan. In the south of Jiangsu, imported and native kinds are extensively produced and in the cool regions around Beijing, they are merely used for pot-planting in winters or for home gardening. However, they are recently being cultured in the orchards of southern subtropical climates of China.
- In Japan, the figs were either introduced through China or planted in mid-1600's around Nagasaki region to be spread nationwide. According to 「Tour of Fruits」 of 1854, four species of figs were introduced in 1868 and many more species in 1913 from North America. General cultivation began in 1900's and expanded to 700~1,00ha by 1923. The cultivation radily declined after World War II, but the modern history of Japanese figs supported by the 400-year history has made the figs one of their major fruits producing 12,000 tones in 1,100ha of land taking 1% of the world's production.



>Others

>Plant

>Healthy Food

>Processed Food

>Seafood

>Vegetable

>Meat

>Fruit

■ Characteristics of Figs



is being spread these days.

Figs of Moraceae of Ficus Linn are classified as tropical leafy arbors according to the environment of their origin and their characteristics. They are vey suitable for relatively high temperatures of summer with low amount of rainfalls. However, Korea with the rainy seasons in summer and frequent rainfalls has somewhat unsuitable climates for figs. The southern coastal areas of Jeonnam, Gyeongnam and Jeju are more suitable for fig cultivation. Figs display their original trains in optimum environments. They grow to be 18m in height, 3m in circumference and 100 years in age in some parts of the world. In Korea, they became relatively small and short adapting to the climate, soil and convenient management and T-shaped intensive culture

▲ top

Others

Nut
Melon
Tomato
StrawBerry
Peach
Persimmon
Apple
Tangerine
Grape
Pear
Watermelon

>Grain



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Growth

a. Four Variations of Figs

Figs are classified into the following four species according to the kinds of flowers and necessity of pollination.

1) Capri Type

○ Scientific Name: *Ficus Carica* Linn. var. *Sylvestres* Shinn It is the wild species of southwest Asia (Asia Minor and Arabia). They have no precedent. There is a short male flower in the chamber and small larvae of bees called 「Brastopaga」 live in the female flowers to bloom small flowers. The pollens of 「Smyrna」 delivered by this insect pollinate the flowers for reproduction. As the fruits are the habitat of insects or as there are too many male flowers, they are inedible. They are not cultured for fruits, but major species include Palmata, Stanford and Samson.

2) Smyrna type

○ Scientific Name: *Ficus Carica* Linn. var. *Smyrnica* Shinn They are grown in Smyrna region of Asia Minor. They are widely cultivated for today's dry fruits. They only have long stems of male flowers on the calyx. In order for them to bear seeds, they need a media of pollination. When they are dried, they have unique and high-quality fragrance. In North America in the late 19th century, they succeeded producing this species to form an innovative industry of dry fruits. 「Calmyrna」 is the major 「Smyrna」 type produced in 「California」. There used to be Calmyrna, Casaba and Badazig, but none of these are produced in Korea or Japan.

3) Common type

○ Scientific Name *Ficus Carica* Linn. var. *hortensis* Shinn These are the general figs produced in Korea and Japan including the 1st Period Fruits (Summer) and 2nd Period Fruits (Autumn). Normally, they do not have male flowers and bear with the female flowers that do not need to be pollinated. The major species include Korea's major types such as 「Dauphine」, 「Horaish」, 「Brunswick」, 「White Jenoa」, 「Brown Turkey」 and 「Kadota」

4) San Pedro type

○ Scientific Name: *Ficus Carica* Linn. var. *intermedia* Shinn It only has female flowers and its 1st Period Fruits bear without the male flowers as the Common types. The 2nd Period Fruits require the pollination of Capri types. Its fruiting habit is in the middle of Common types and Smyrna types. They are not grown in Korea and Japan partially produces the fruits and seedlings.

○ Classifications of figs according to their fruiting habits

Classifications	Characteristics	Species
Capri fig type	-Have female and male flowers in the calyx and parasitic bees to pollinate them with Smyrna type. -Not edible (Insects, too many male flowers) -1st Period (Spring), 2nd Period (Summer), 3rd Period (Winter)。	palmata Stanford Samson
Smyrna fig type	-Only female flowers in the calyx -No self bearing, but bear with the pollination of Capri type. -Produced and dried in California, USA.	Calmyrna Casaba
Common fig type	-Major production of Korea and Japan -All female flowers self-bear. -No pollination needed and produce high-quality fruits.	Dauphine Horaish Brunswick (White Genoa) Brown Turkey
San pedro fig type	-Only female flowers. 1st Period (Summer) self-bear and 2nd Period (Autumn) require pollination. -Medium type of Common and Smyrna types -Not produced in Korea-Expected to prosper as summer and autumn fruits.	Sanpedro White Violette Dauphine

b.Branch Bearing:

The blossoms of figs are related to the growth of shoots. As they sequentially differentiate each season, they are easy to bear fruits. They bear fruits in the same year of plantation, but the harvest is possible from the second year. In case of 「Dauphine」, they are harvested after 2~3 years from the plantation, prosper after 7~15 years and begin to rapidly decrease the production. Figs are characterized by branch-bearing compared to other fruits.

c. Easy Spread:

Most of fruits spread by growing seedlings by grafting, but figs can be massively spread by cuttage. As figs have been produced for several years to experience Root-knot Nematode damages or sickness of soil, grafting of good-resistance branches should be done.

d. Adaptation to Soils:

Figs require lot of calcium and grow well in low-alkali soils. Figs do not absorb much fertilizer. They originally have huge leaves that grow easily and thin roots, so are weak against drought.

e. Management:

As they are produced for table use in Korea, they are extremely difficult to store for distribution. In particular, Korea's autumn figs are produced in Sep~Oct and Korea has frequent rainfall to cause difficult distribution. Recently, institutional film greenhouses and no-rain cultivation methods are used to extend the harvest season or to produce high-quality fruits. Fig cultivation relatively requires less labor only during the winter pruning and early-in-the-morning harvesting of autumns. They are very strong against diseases for laborsaving and a 3-people family can cultivate 0.5~0.8acre of fig orchard. 50~60% of the labor are consumed for harvesting.

[▲ top](#)**■ Figs and Health**

Figs are largely produced and contain huge amount of vitamins, minerals and ficin that dissolve protein to be effective for digestion, alcohol toxication and fish toxication. Raw fruits are enjoyed for healthy food in the West and its especially high sugar content makes it good for dry fruit, jam, jelly, wine and juice. In Korea, raw fruits are mostly distributed and sometimes processed for jam, vinegar, juice, canned food, dry fruit and meat marinate. Various idea foods such as jelly, fruit punch, soups, donuts, rice cakes and rolls are developed as snacks for kids or seniors.

Nutritions

Figs, popular for their unique scent, are used for various foods such as bread and snacks. In particular, as they have been reevaluated as healthy food with twice more fiber and iron than prunes, more calcium than milk, 80% more potassium than bananas and huge amount of polyphenol that prevents cancer, they attract the food specialists more than ever. Figs are ideal source of fibers. Fibers are classified into soluble and insoluble fibers. Food with lots of water-soluble fibers reduces the harmful cholesterol in blood. Also, food with lots of insoluble fibers clears the intestines. Fibers contain balanced soluble and insoluble fibers. In 40g of figs (4~5 fruits), about 5g of fibers are contained. This is 20% of the fiber an adults need to intake a day. Figs are free of cholesterol and saturated fat. However, they are abundant in minerals. Calculated based on the US daily nutrition requirement for American people, 4~5 figs provide 7% of potassium, 6% of calcium and 6% of iron. Potassium maintains normal blood pressure and calcium is essential for bone formation. Iron prevents anesias. In particular, figs are ideal for kids and women who need calcium and iron.

[▲ top](#)