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The NAFEX FIG Page

Ray U. Givan - NAFEX Fig Interest Group Coordinator

History of Fig Growing

Figs he been cultivated in the Eastern Mediterranean area for thousands of years. Archaeologists like Daniel Zohary think it was one of the first fruits domesticated--as early as 4000 B. C. Sumerian scribes writing on clay tablets around 2500 BC in the reign of King Drukagina mention

figs as do the earliest books in the Bible. In the New Testament, one of Jesus' parables deals with a fig that failed to produce. His remedy to apply fertilizer and care was highly appropriate.

The Spanish were the first to bring the fig to the United States (Florida by 1575). The Spanish Franciscan missionaries brought figs into California when they established a mission at San Diego in 1769. The fig they brought is "Mission." And, it is still a significant commercial fig.

The Anglo-Americans who moved to California liked the "Mission" fig, but wanted all of the finest varieties and began importing cuttings and plants privately. The San Francisco Bulletin organized a campaign to establish the **very best fig**, the Sari Lop, from Smyrna, Turkey. This campaign seemed like a complete failure for Sari Lop did not produce fruit in California and no one knew why it didn't. It couldn't be pollination--the most knowledgeable experts said figs did not need it. A lot of fig plants were torn up and thrown away as useless until the American botanist, Gust Eisen, proved those particular experts were wrong. Some figs, including the "Sari Lop," needed pollination. W. T. Swingle imported the tiny pollinating insect, *Blastophaga psenes*, into California. It was a huge success and the California dried fig industry celebrated a few years later by giving the "Sari Lop" the new name "Calimyrna."

Using *B. psenes* did not prove, however, to be a panacea. The little fellow pollinated figs, but it also spread diseases and fungi. The USDA research program recommended sanitary measures, but saw the final solution in the breeding of a substitute for "Calimyrna" which did not need pollinating (or caprifigation, as it is usually called). Ira J. Condit began studying figs in the 1920s and bred a large number of varieties, some of which were released beginning in 1957. William B. Storey continued his work into the 1980s. The fig industry is not large or politically powerful and the budget cuts of recent years he eliminated the fig breeding programs. Most of the material which Condit and Storey created has been lost, but a little

is preserved at the USDA Clonal Resources Depository in Dis, California and a few private collections.

The only fig breeding being done today is by amateurs although figs are still a moderately important crop in California and some Mediterranean countries--Algeria, Italy, Greece and Turkey. Fresh figs ship poorly, so most of the crop is dried for export to areas that cannot grow figs. Some is made into paste for use in making fig newtons and other pastries. A tiny portion is canned. Gardeners grow figs around the world, consuming the fruit fresh, stewed, preserved or making it into jam. There are no significant commercial orchards in the Southern states at present time.

Botany

The common fig is a member of the genus *Ficus* that is included in the family Moraceae (Mulberries). *Ficus* is a large genus with some 2000 tropical and subtropical tree, shrub and vine species distributed around the whole world. The only *Ficus* cultivated for their fruit are the species *F. carica* (the common fig) and *F. sycamorus* (the sycamore fig of Egypt). *F. carica* is a diploid species with a basic chromosome number of $x = 13$. Hybrids are possible with a few other species including *F. palmata*, *F. pseudo-carica* and *F. pumila*.

The fruit of all *Ficus* species is the syconium, an enlarged, fleshy and hollow peduncle bearing closely massed tiny flowers on its inner wall. The true fruits are tiny drupelets which develop from these flowers. [When we eat a fig we are eating the container which holds the true fruit.]

There are two basic types of figs: caprifigs and edible figs. Caprifigs are males, which

produce pollen, but are generally unpalatable due to the presence of chaffy stamen structures.

There are many varieties of edible figs which fall into the three following fruiting classes:

Caducous (or Smyrna) figs

need pollination to set crops. Without pollination the fruit drops before maturing. Caprifigs furnish the pollen needed. Examples are Marabout, Calimyrna (or Sari Lop), and Zidi.

Persistent (or Common) figs

do not need pollination to set crops and are the type home gardeners most commonly grow. Examples are Black Mission, Brown Turkey, Celeste, Brunswick and Adriatic.

Intermediate Group (or San Pedro) figs

do not need pollination to set a breba crop but do need it for the main crop (in some environments). Examples are King, Lampeira, and (of course) San Pedro.

Fig Varieties

Condit's massive monograph (See **Suggested Reading**) identifies 89 caprifig, 129 Smyrna, 21 San Pedro and 481 common fig varieties for a total of 720 varieties. Some of these varieties were never introduced into the United States; others were tried, found wanting and discarded.

Our listing of 50+ varieties includes most of the figs aailable in the trade **plus** some varieties the authors think worthy of wider use. It divides the varieties into **green and yellow figs** and **dark figs**, arranged alphabetically by their most common name. We use **bold type** for the correct name, the one found in the scientific literature. (If there is no name in bold type, the variety is not covered by Condit or later authors.) The listing follows Condit's names.

Condit lists many characteristics in his own identifications, but the NAFEX website has room only for the major features of the fruit. Fig lees vary tremendously and an important characteristic for identifying varieties. For further information consult **Suggested Readings** or Ray Givan, the NAFEX Fig Coordinator at 912 728-4028 or raygivan@earthlink.net

- Green and Yellow Varieties -- Adriatic to Genoa Adriatic - A medium green to greenish-yellow fig shaped like a top with light strawberry pulp and good flor. Turbinate with small or no neck. Very subject to mosaic. Well-adapted in the Northwest, but disappointing in the South. Fairly hardy. Good for drying. Synonyms: Chico, Grosse Verte, Nebian, Strawberry, Verdone.

Alma - A small to medium fig golden-brown, pear-shaped (pyriform) fig with amber pulp. Sweet and delicate flor. Bred by Texas A & M and released in 1975. Well adapted in the Southeast. highly resistant to fruit rots. Wood is very hardy.

Bianci - A medium to large greenish-yellow fig with white pulp and many seeds. Top-shaped (turbinate) without neck. Sweet and delicate flor with a nutty texture from the soft seeds. Identical with Blanche EXCEPT the eye is small and closed. Synonym: Mayes Yellow.

Blanche - An old, reliable variety usually called Lemon in the South. Medium light green fig with white pulp. Same as Bianci except for the open eye (which can lead to souring). Well-adapted in the South. Fairly hardy. Synonyms: Lemon, Marseilles, White Russian, etc.

Brunswick - A medium to large fig with bronzy-yellow skin and rich flor. Oblique-turbinate. Well-adapted in the Southwest and drier areas of the South. The fruit is ruined by excessive rain. Fairly hardy. Synonyms: Dalmatian, Madonna, Magnolia.

Calimyrna - The California commercial fig. Large yellow fig with amber pulp and a large open eye. Oblate-spherical. Sweet, very rich nutty flor. Numerous seeds. Needs pollination. Not practical for Southern growers. Synonyms: Erbeyli, Lop Injir, Sari Lop.

Conadria - A medium to large yellow-green fig with light strawberry pulp and rich flor, bred by Ira Condit and released in 1957. Pyriform. Well adapted in California and the Southeast. Fairly hardy. Synonyms: Adriatic Hybrid, Verdone Hybrid.

Excel - A medium-sized yellow fig with amber pulp, also bred by Ira Condit and released in 1975. Oblate to spherical. Well- adapted in California. Early trials in the Southeast are very promising. Seems to be very hardy. Superb flor. Synonyms: Kadota Hybrid.

Galbun - A large, light green to pale yellow fig with a translucent pulp tinged with pink. Good flor. Seems moderately hardy. Synonyms: Jewel, Malcolm's Super Giant.

- Green and Yellow Varieties -- Gillette to Tena Gillette - A large, edible caprifiig with fair flor. Pyriform with distinct neck. Adapted in northern California and the Northwest. Not so good in the South. Synonyms: **Croisic**, Cordelia, Pingo de Mel.
Green Ischia - A small, grass green fig with dark strawberry pulp. Oblate to spherical. Small, fairly well closed eye. Good quality, but not as good as Brown Turkey. Matures late. Fairly

hardy. Synonyms: Cœur, Verdale, **Verte**.

Ischia - A small to medium yellow fig with fair flor. Oblate to spherical with or without short neck. Well-adapted in coastal California. Its quality in the South is poor. Synonyms: Brockett Hall, Singleton, White Ischia

Jurupa - Very large, green fig with pink pulp and a medium, but closed eye. Pyriform. A Condit hybrid selected by Julius Enderud. Good flor. Under trial in the South.

Kadota - Greenish-white fig, small to medium sized. Pyriform. Vigorous. Delicious fresh or dried. It is a rich, sweet, all purpose fig and the most common canned fig. Well-adapted in the Southwest and drier areas of the South. Fairly hardy. Synonyms: **Dottato**, etc.

King - A medium greenish-yellow fig with strawberry pulp. Pyriform to oblique. It ripens a large breba crop between late June and August. A San Pedro type, it sometimes sets main crop figs without pollination. Sweet and rich. Well-adapted in the Northwest and cooler areas of the South. Fairly hardy. Synonyms: Desert King, White King.

Lattarula - A medium to large yellowish-green fig widely grown in the Northwest. It is said to be very sweet. Condit does not identify it as a distinct variety and considers it a synonym for Blanche, but its lees are quite different. Synonyms: Italian Honey Fig

LSU Gold - A large yellow fig blushed with red. Strawberry pulp. A. J. Bullard says its flor is outstanding. Has a small eye that leaks honeydew. Deserves wider trials.

Mary Lane- A medium yellow fig said to he originated in California. The fruit is very juicy and nearly seedless. Well-adapted in all fig areas. Synonyms: Jelly , Seedless.

Panachée - A chimera which produces green fruit with yellow stripes and strawberry pulp. Pyriform with prominent neck. Mealy texture. Leaf: **not variegated**. Aficionados in California say it can produce excellent, fresh fruit. In the South its flor is mediocre. Synonyms: Panache, Tiger, Variegato.

Tena - A medium to large greenish-yellow fig with light strawberry pulp, bred by Ira Condit and released in 1975. Oblate with small or no neck. Widely adapted, but likes hot, dry weather. Somewhat hardy. Very sweet, but not rich.

- Dark Varieties -- Beall to Hardy Chicago **Beall** - A medium to large, purplish-black fig with amber pulp. Brebas are pyriform with prominent neck; main crop is oblate to pyriform with a short, thick neck. Very good flor. Well-adapted in California and hardy in the South.

Black Jack - A large to very large purple brown fig with amber pulp streaked with strawberry. Oblate, flattened. Good flor. Fairly hardy. Black Jack is an unidentified variety. Some think it is identical with California Brown Turkey. Synonym: Black Spanish.

Bordeaux - Large almost black fruit with a very deep red pulp and a distinctive, but agreeable acid flor. Brebas are pyriform with a thick, tapering neck; main crop figs are variable often without neck. Medium eye. Excellent fresh or dried. Well-adapted in the South and Southwest. Fairly hardy. Synonyms: Beer's Black, Negronne, Violette de Bordeaux, etc.

Brown Turkey - Small to medium light brown to violet fruit with strawberry pulp. Turbinate to oblique, mostly without neck. Small eye which has a reddish color from very early stage (unlike **Celeste**). Cold hardy. It fruits on new growth if winter killed. Often bears two crops a year. Very sweet, but not rich. Synonyms: Eastern Brown Turkey, English Brown Turkey, Everbearing, Texas Everbearing.

California Brown Turkey - A large purplish-brown fig with good flor. Brebas are oblique-pyriform, sometimes elongated; main crop figs are oblique-pyriform with variable neck. Well-adapted in California. Not hardy enough for the South. Synonyms: Black Jack(?), Black Spanish, San Pedro, **San Piero**, Thompson's Improved Brown Turkey.

Celeste - Small to medium fig with light brown to violet skin and strawberry pulp. Pyriform with tapering neck. Small, closed eye. The eye remains green until the fig is almost ripe (unlike **Brown Turkey**). Very cold hardy. Excellent fig -- arguably the finest Southern fig, but usually disappointing in California and the Southwest. Synonyms: Celestial, Conant, Sugar Fig, **Malta**, Tennessee Mountain Fig.

Early Violet - A small to very small chocolate brown fig with amber to pink pulp. Turbinate to oblate-spherical. No brebas, but the main crop is early. Fair to good quality. Once very popular in the South. Susceptible to mosaic which dwarfs fruit and lees.

Flanders - A greenish-yellow, medium fig with violet stripes and amber pulp, bred and released by Ira Condit in 1975. Pyriform with a long slender neck. Fine flor. Plants are vigorous, but not particularly hardy. Good on the West Coast. Synonym: Verdane Hybrid.

Hardy Chicago - Small to medium fruit with light brown to violet skin and strawberry pink pulp. Small eye. Pyriform with long slender neck. Excellent flor and very hardy. Resembles Brown Turkey.

- Dark Varieties -- Hunt to Petite Negri **Hunt** - A small brown fig with amber pulp tinged with strawberry, bred by E. W. Hunt of Eatonton, Georgia in the 1920s. Pyriform with a short distinct neck. Distinctive feature is its long, slender stems to 3/4" long stems that help it shed rain. Superb flor, sweet and rich. Not a hey bearer, but well-adapted in the rainy areas of the South.

Ischia Black - A small purplish-black fig with strawberry pulp. Turbinate. Fairly sweet and rich flor. Well-adapted in coastal California, but not very productive in the South. Not particularly hardy. Has been replaced by Celeste.

LSU Purple -A small to medium purple fig with variable shape and flor introduced by Louisiana State University in 1991. Its breeder, E. N. O'Rourke, says the plant is nematode resistant. Well adapted to the Deep South. Fairly tender.

Mission - A large black fig with light strawberry pulp. Brebas are pyriform with a prominent thick neck; main crop figs are smaller and more variable, pyriform. Well-adapted in California. Disappointing in the South since it is not very hardy. Often infected by mosaic that mottles the lees, but does not seem to effect the crop. Synonyms: **Franciscana**, Black Mission.

Nero - A large purplish-black fig with light pink pulp. Turbinate-pyriform with a flattened apex. Eye medium, open. Flor is fairly sweet and rich. Very good to excellent flor. Well-adapted in the Southwest and South. Synonyms: **Barnisotte**, Brogiotto Nero.

Neveralla - A medium bronze to brown fig with white to amber pulp. Brebas are pyriform with prominent neck; main crop figs are pyriform to turbinate with a thick neck. Variable stalks. Fair flor. Resembles Osborn Prolific. Synonyms: **Archipel**, Osborn, Osborne's Prolific.

Osborn Prolific - A medium bronze to brown fig with amber to light strawberry pulp. Main crop figs are pyriform with variable necks. Long slender stalks (to 1" long). Sweet and rich flor. Well-adapted in all fig growing areas. Hardy. Very productive. Synonyms: Archipel, Hardy Prolific, Neveralla, Osborne, Rust.

Pasquale - A small purple fig with strawberry pulp distinguished by its late ripening--often in December or January. Oblate-spherical to pyriform with a short thick neck. Not hardy. Fruit is sweet and rich when not damaged by frost. Synonyms: Natalino, **Vernino**.

Petite Negri - A medium to large, black fig introduced by Mike McConkey of Edible Landscaping. Good flor. Its lees resemble those of **Alma** and it may be a sport of **Alma**.

- Dark Varieties -- Royal Vineyard to Sal's Fig Royal Vineyard - A medium bronze to brown fig with light strawberry pulp. Brebas are pyriform with a prominent thick and curving neck. A San Pedro type. Brebas only! Not worth growing in the South due to our late frosts which destroy the fruit in most years. A vigorous plant, it might deserve a trial in the North and West. Synonym: **Drap d'Or**

Sal's Fig - A small to medium unidentified black fig with good flor. Well-adapted in Northeast. A local nursery (no mail order) on Long Island introduced it. It is extremely hardy. Plants are vigorous and hardy.

Growing Figs

Figs are easy to grow in warm climates, but produce their best fruit in Mediterranean climates with hot, dry summers and cool, wet winters. Although they are a subtropical species, mature trees are fully cold hardy to 15 or 20°F. People who wish to grow figs outside their normal range must plant them in containers or go to considerable efforts to protect them during the winter.

In the ground, fig plants can quickly reach 15 to 30 feet in height. The canopy can spread equally wide. The root system is typically very shallow without a taproot and can easily spread to three times the diameter of the canopy. Ideally, fig plants should be in a well-drained loam with plenty of organic matter, but they will tolerate even to poor soil. Once they are established they are somewhat drought tolerant (probably due to their very extensive and wide-ranging root system). Figs tolerate soils with pH ranging from 5.5 to 8.0. Growers with acidic soils should apply lime to bring the pH up to the fig's preferred pH of 6.0 to 6.5. Alkaline soils will also support figs, if there are no black alkali deposits present.

Fig plants need plenty of sun (8+ hours at least) and heat which helps ripen the fruit. Figs

respond very well (better than most fruit trees) to heavy applications of manure and compost. Be sure not to apply fertilizers too late in the growing season since that would spur new growth that cannot harden off before winter. Apply 2 to 3 cups of a balanced (6-6-6 or 8-8-8) fertilizer with micro-nutrients three times a year to mature, in-ground plants. If you grow figs in containers, be sure to use a fertilizer containing them. We recommend a complete slow-release fertilizer like Osmocote. Follow the package directions. Organic growers should apply generous amounts of compost and a high-nitrogen fertilizer like cottonseed, soybean or alfalfa meal.

For the best fruit production, water your figs **regularly** during the growing season unless rainfall is adequate. Take care that the soil is not constantly soggy. When fall arrives, stop watering and allow your plants to harden off. A word of caution: heavy rains and excessive or sporadic watering may cause the fruit to split. The amount of splitting varies from variety to variety, but a good rule of thumb is that the riper the figs, the more they will split and sour.

Container culture can be successful if you are diligent about watering and feeding the plants. Remember that nutrients leach quickly from containers. The easiest approach is to use a hefty pot (15+ gallons) and let the figs grow 5 to 10 feet tall with regular annual pruning of tops and roots to control the size. In climates where winter temperatures fall under 15-20° F, you will need to bring potted plants into an unheated garage or shed.

Propagating Figs

Figs are easy to propagate as they root very easily. There are several ways to propagate them.

The most common method is to root leafless cuttings taken in late winter or early spring. Here's how to do it:

- Take cuttings which are 3 to 6 inches long and pencil to finger thick. The best cuttings will be some of last year's wood on them.
- If the weather is still unsettled and likely to frost, store the cuttings in a sealed ziplock in the produce bin in your refrigerator. If the weather is warm and likely to stay warm, pot your cuttings in sand or a good-quality potting mix.
- Using 4" deep plastic pots, pack a half sheet of newspaper tightly into the bottom of the pot. Put a little mix in the bottom, stand 1 to 4 cuttings upright in each pot and fill the pot with the mix.
- Water the pots thoroughly and stand them in a very bright, BUT NOT SUNNY place. It should be warm--70+° F. If you can't keep air temperature above 70°, provide bottom heat to bring the soil up to 70° F. Cover the pot with an empty 2 or 3 liter softdrink bottle with the bottom cut out. [Leave the lid on.]
- Don't water the cuttings again until they are very dry. Test for dryness occasionally by lifting the pot. If the pot is very light, water it by setting it in a pan of water and letting it soak. When you see vigorous growth, it is time to harden off the new plants. Remove the bottle cap and see how they do. If okay, remove the bottle after a few days. Keep an eye on them and reinstall the bottle if the plants wilt.
- After a few days, it will be time to pot up the new plants. Don't do this just because you see leaves growing. Sometimes there will be 4 or 5 leaves and few if any roots. Wait until you see vigorous growth. Apply fertilizer.

Overwintering Figs

Ficus carica is the northernmost species in the *Ficus* genus. Figs that are completely dormant before severely cold weather arrives can tolerate temperatures down to 15 to 20° F with little or no damage. Some varieties are hardier and can tolerate even lower temperatures. If the top is winterkilled, the plant will probably come back from the base or underground parts.

If you live in a colder area, it is very important to grow hardy varieties. The hardiest figs include the old favorites Celeste and English Brown Turkey and some new varieties like Alma and Hardy Chicago. Here are some tips on how to protect your figs in the coldest climates:

One method is to build a fighouse like A. J. Bullard of Mt. Olive, North Carolina has done to protect some of his varieties which are grafted onto a very hardy in-ground Celeste. He built a winter fighouse by setting pressure-treated posts in the ground around his tree. As winter approaches he attaches plywood to the posts to form walls and a roof. Additional protection

is given by several 55-gallon drums stationed in the fighouse and filled with water. The water in the drums stores an enormous amount of heat energy that is released as temperatures fall below freezing. The energy released moderates temperatures in the fighouse. Even at temperatures near 0° F, the fighouse's temperature stays in the mid-twenties. [Do not try this in Minnesota. This will work only where warm and cold spells alternate during the winter and erage temperatures are well above 32° F.]

For Severe Climates:

There are three ways to over winter figs in severe climates:

- Permanently planted trees can be bent over, weighed down, and buried.
- Potted plants can be brought indoors or into the greenhouse, and
- Large potted plants can be depotted and buried.

Not sure how to do it?

Call Ray Givan, the NAFEX Fig Coordinator, at 912-728-4028 or e-mail your questions to him at raygivan@earthlink.net

Disease and Pest Problems

Figs are relatively pest and disease free, but they do he problems. The most serious problem for Southern growers who he light sandy soils is root knot nematodes. This type of infestation is easy to diagnose. Just uncover some roots and inspect them. If you see tiny galls or swellings on the roots you he root knot **nematodes**. The best control is to destroy infected plants and not use that site for figs again.

Fig trees and fruit are sometimes attacked by a variety of borers, mealybugs and scale insects. Dried-fruit beetles will sometimes enter figs through the eye of the fruit and cause them to sour. Varieties with open eyes are particularly susceptible to this problem. The best remedy

for these problems is sanitation. Prune and burn infested wood and fruit. Don't allow piles of lees and fruit to accumulate and offer breeding sites for insects. **Fig Rust** is a fairly serious fungal disease. It attacks young lees, causing defoliation. It is also easy to recognize from the small yellow-green spots that appear on lees. The spots will get bigger and turn yellowish brown. The leaf will soon yellow and fall. You can control fig rust by sanitation measures. Extension services also recommend spraying the new lees with a 4-4-50 Bordeaux spray at three to four week intervals (more often in rainy weather). This will also protect your plants against other leaf and twig blights. **Mosaic** is a viral disease to which figs are more or less susceptible. The plainest symptom is mottled lees. Some varieties are dwarfed--lees and fruit-- by mosaic; others are scarcely effected. Mosaic is incurable, but rarely a reason to discard plants. We copied and made some minor revisions to following table from USDA Handbook No. 87 that covers the most common problems.

Condition	Probable cause	Suggested remedy
Fruit drops when it is 1/3 to 1/2 full size	Wrong variety for area. It needs pollination	Destroy tree and replace it with a recommended variety

<p>Lees drop off prematurely; fruit withers and fails to mature</p>	<p>Fig rust or other leaf diseases, or a twig blight.</p>	<p>Use 4-4-50 Bordeaux spray. Rake and burn old lees</p>
<p>Poor fruiting. Tree growth is retarded. Roots he knots or galls and are distorted.</p>	<p>Nematode damage</p>	<p>Mulch; Use pot culture, or plant next to a building</p>
<p>Fruit fails to mature; lees are small. Vigorous new wood arises from base.</p>	<p>Low temperatures he killed some stem tissues</p>	<p>Cut tree back to ground level and grow a new top from suckers that arise.</p>
<p>Fruit sours and many split.</p>	<p>Unsuitable variety or unusually wet year.</p>	<p>Replace with a more suitable variety or pick immature fruit for preserves.</p>

Fruit is tough and falls prematurely during hot dry weather.	Excessive heat.	No control; typical of some varieties such as Celeste
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Sources

The following nurseries offer medium to large assortments of fig varieties. Listing is not an endorsement. We do not guarantee that you will be satisfied with any of their products or services.

Chestnut Hill Nursery, 15105 NW 94 enue, Alachua, FL 32615. 800 669-2067. Free catalog.
Edible Landscaping, P. O. Box 77, Afton, VA 22920. 800 524-4156. URL: www.EAT-IT.com Illustrated catalog free.

Fig Tree Nursery, P. O. Box 124, Gulf Hammock, FL 32639. 352 486-2930. Catalog \$1.00.

Just Fruits, Route 2, Box 4818, Crawfordville, FL 32327. 904 926-5644. Free catalog.

Louisiana Nursery, Route 7, Box 43, Opelousas, LA 70570. 318 948-3696. Catalog \$6.00.

Oregon Exotics, 1065 Messenger Road, Grants Pass, OR 97527. 503 846-7578. Illustrated catalog \$3.00.

Peter Bauwen, Trompwegel 27, B9170 De Klinge, Belgium. Write for catalog information. (Figs can be legally imported in the U.S. with proper USDA import permits and quarantine.)

Raintree Nursery, 391 Butts Road, Morton, WA 98356. 360 496-6400. Illustrated catalog free.

Read's Nursery, Hales Hall, Loddon, Norfolk, NR14 6QW, Great Britain. 44 01508 548395. Write or call for catalog information. (Figs can be legally imported in the U.S. with proper USDA import permits and quarantine.)

Several NAFEX Fig Interest Groups members also sell figs on an amateur or casual sales basis:

Fred W. Born, 5715 W. Paul Bryant Drive, Crystal River, FL 34429-7523. 352 795-0489.

Bill Fogarty, 1035 S.E. Bell enue, Corvallis, OR 97333 541 758-5272.

Ray Givan, 2412 Lowground Road, Guyton, GA 31312. 912 728-4028. E-Mail to: raygivan@earthlink.net

In addition to these commercial and amateur sources, the U. S. Department of Agriculture maintains a series of National Clonal Germplasm Repositories from which cuttings are ailable.

The one at the University of California, Dis holds their fig resources. Their address is:

[National Clonal Germplasm Repository, USDA-ARS](#)

University of California

Dis, CA 95616916 752-6504 (voice) or 752-5974 (fax)

Suggested Reading

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Fig Varieties

Condit's massive monograph (See Suggested Reading) identifies 89 caprifig, 129 Smyrna, 21 San Pedro and 481 common fig varieties for a total of 720 varieties. Some of these varieties were never introduced into the United States; others were tried, found wanting and discarded. Our listing of 50 + varieties includes most of the figs aailable in the trade plus some varieties the authors think worthy of wider use. It divides the varieties into green and yellow figs and dark figs, arranged alphabetically by their most common name. We use bold type for the correct name, the one found in the scientific literature. (If there is no name in bold type, the variety is not covered by Condit or later authors.) The listing follows Condit's names.

Condit lists many characteristics in his own identifications, but the NAFEX website has room only for the major features of the fruit. Fig lees vary tremendously and an important characteristic for identifying varieties. For further information consult Suggested Readings or Ray Givan, the NAFEX Fig Coordinator at 912 728-4028 or raygivan@earthlink.net

Green and Yellow Varieties -- Adriatic to Genoa Adriatic - A medium green to greenish-yellow fig shaped like a top with light strawberry pulp and good flor. Turbinate with small or no neck. Very

subject to mosaic. Well-adapted in the Northwest, but disappointing in the South. Fairly hardy.

Good for drying. Synonyms: Chico, Grosse Verte, Nebian, Strawberry, Verdone.

Alma - A small to medium fig golden-brown, pear-shaped (pyriform) fig with amber pulp. Sweet and delicate flor. Bred by Texas A & M and released in 1975. Well adapted in the Southeast. highly resistant to fruit rots. Wood is very hardy.

Bianci - A medium to large greenish-yellow fig with white pulp and many seeds. Top-shaped (turbinate) without neck. Sweet and delicate flor with a nutty texture from the soft seeds. Identical with Blanche EXCEPT the eye is small and closed. Synonym: Mayes Yellow.

Blanche - An old, reliable variety usually called Lemon in the South. Medium light green fig with white pulp. Same as Bianci except for the open eye (which can lead to souring). Well-adapted in the South. Fairly hardy. Synonyms: Lemon, Marseilles, White Russian, etc.

Brunswick - A medium to large fig with bronzy-yellow skin and rich flor. Oblique-turbinate. Well-adapted in the Southwest and drier areas of the South. The fruit is ruined by excessive rain. Fairly hardy. Synonyms: Dalmatian, Madonna, Magnolia.

Calimyrna - The California commercial fig. Large yellow fig with amber pulp and a large open eye. Oblate-spherical. Sweet, very rich nutty flor. Numerous seeds. Needs pollination. Not practical for Southern growers. Synonyms: Erbeyli, Lop Injir, Sari Lop.

Conadria - A medium to large yellow-green fig with light strawberry pulp and rich flor, bred by Ira Condit and released in 1957. Pyriform. Well adapted in California and the Southeast. Fairly hardy. Synonyms: Adriatic Hybrid, Verdone Hybrid.

Excel - A medium-sized yellow fig with amber pulp, also bred by Ira Condit and released in 1975. Oblate to spherical. Well-adapted in California. Early trials in the Southeast are very promising. Seems to be very hardy. Superb flor. Synonyms: Kadota Hybrid.

Galbun - A large, light green to pale yellow fig with a translucent pulp tinged with pink. Good flor.

Seems moderately hardy. Synonyms: Jewel, Malcolm's Super Giant.

Green and Yellow Varieties -- Gillette to Tena Gillette - A large, edible caprifig with fair flor. Pyriform with distinct neck. Adapted in northern California and the Northwest. Not so good in the South.

Synonyms: Croisic, Cordelia, Pingo de Mel.

Green Ischia - A small, grass green fig with dark strawberry pulp. Oblate to spherical. Small, fairly well closed eye. Good quality, but not as good as Brown Turkey. Matures late. Fairly hardy.

Synonyms: Cœur, Verdale, Verte.

Ischia - A small to medium yellow fig with fair flor. Oblate to spherical with or without short neck.

Well-adapted in coastal California. Its quality in the South is poor. Synonyms: Brockett Hall,

Singleton, White Ischia

Jurupa - Very large, green fig with pink pulp and a medium, but closed eye. Pyriform. A Condit hybrid selected by Julius Enderud. Good flor. Under trial in the South.

Kadota - Greenish-white fig, small to medium sized. Pyriform. Vigorous. Delicious fresh or dried. It is a rich, sweet, all purpose fig and the most common canned fig. Well-adapted in the Southwest and drier areas of the South. Fairly hardy. Synonyms: Dottato, etc.

King - A medium greenish-yellow fig with strawberry pulp. Pyriform to oblique. It ripens a large breba crop between late June and August. A San Pedro type, it sometimes sets main crop figs without pollination. Sweet and rich. Well-adapted in the Northwest and cooler areas of the South.

Fairly hardy. Synonyms: Desert King, White King.

Latfordia - A medium to large yellowish-green fig widely grown in the Northwest. It is said to be very sweet. Condit does not identify it as a distinct variety and considers it a synonym for Blanche, but its lees are quite different. Synonyms: Italian Honey Fig

LSU Gold - A large yellow fig blushed with red. Strawberry pulp. A. J. Bullard says its flor is outstanding. Has a small eye that leaks honeydew. Deserves wider trials.

Mary Lane- A medium yellow fig said to be originated in California. The fruit is very juicy and nearly seedless. Well-adapted in all fig areas. Synonyms: Jelly , Seedless.

Panachée - A chimera which produces green fruit with yellow stripes and strawberry pulp. Pyriform with prominent neck. Mealy texture. Leaf: not variegated. Aficionados in California say it can produce excellent, fresh fruit. In the South its flor is mediocre. Synonyms: Panache, Tiger, Variegato.

Tena - A medium to large greenish-yellow fig with light strawberry pulp, bred by Ira Condit and released in 1975. Oblate with small or no neck. Widely adapted, but likes hot, dry weather. Somewhat hardy. Very sweet, but not rich.

Dark Varieties -- Beall to Hardy
Chicago Beall - A medium to large, purplish-black fig with amber pulp. Brebas are pyriform with prominent neck; main crop is oblate to pyriform with a short, thick neck. Very good flor. Well-adapted in California and hardy in the South.

Black Jack - A large to very large purple brown fig with amber pulp streaked with strawberry. Oblate, flattened. Good flor. Fairly hardy. Black Jack is an unidentified variety. Some think it is identical with California Brown Turkey. Synonym: Black Spanish.

Bordeaux - Large almost black fruit with a very deep red pulp and a distinctive, but agreeable acid flor. Brebas are pyriform with a thick, tapering neck; main crop figs are variable often without neck. Medium eve. Excellent fresh or dried. Well-adapted in the South and Southwest. Fairlv hardv.

Synonyms: Beer's Black, Negronne, Violette de Bordeaux, etc.

Brown Turkey - Small to medium light brown to violet fruit with strawberry pulp. Turbinate to oblique, mostly without neck. Small eye which has a reddish color from very early stage (unlike Celeste). Cold hardy. It fruits on new growth if winter killed. Often bears two crops a year. Very sweet, but not rich. Synonyms: Eastern Brown Turkey, English Brown Turkey, Everbearing, Texas Everbearing.

California Brown Turkey - A large purplish-brown fig with good flor. Brebas are oblique-pyriform, sometimes elongated; main crop figs are oblique-pyriform with variable neck. Well-adapted in California. Not hardy enough for the South. Synonyms: Black Jack(?), Black Spanish, San Pedro, San Piero, Thompson's Improved Brown Turkey.

Celeste - Small to medium fig with light brown to violet skin and strawberry pulp. Pyriform with tapering neck. Small, closed eye. The eye remains green until the fig is almost ripe (unlike Brown Turkey). Very cold hardy. Excellent fig -- arguably the finest Southern fig, but usually disappointing in California and the Southwest. Synonyms: Celestial, Conant, Sugar Fig, Malta, Tennessee Mountain Fig.

Early Violet - A small to very small chocolate brown fig with amber to pink pulp. Turbinate to oblate-spherical. No brebas, but the main crop is early. Fair to good quality. Once very popular in the South. Susceptible to mosaic which dwarfs fruit and lees.

Flanders - A greenish-yellow, medium fig with violet stripes and amber pulp, bred and released by Ira Condit in 1975. Pyriform with a long slender neck. Fine flor. Plants are vigorous, but not particularly hardy. Good on the West Coast. Synonym: Verdone Hybrid.

Hardy Chicago - Small to medium fruit with light brown to violet skin and strawberry pink pulp.

Small eve. Pvriform with lona slender neck. Excellent flor and verv hardv. Resembles Brown Turkey.

Dark Varieties -- Hunt to Petite Negri Hunt - A small brown fig with amber pulp tinged with strawberry, bred by E. W. Hunt of Eatonton, Georgia in the 1920s. Pyriform with a short distinct neck. Distinctive feature is its long, slender stems to 3/4" long stems that help it shed rain. Superb flor, sweet and rich. Not a hey bearer, but well-adapted in the rainy areas of the South.

Ischia Black - A small purplish-black fig with strawberry pulp. Turbinate. Fairly sweet and rich flor. Well-adapted in coastal California, but not very productive in the South. Not particularly hardy. Has been replaced by Celeste.

LSU Purple -A small to medium purple fig with variable shape and flor introduced by Louisiana State University in 1991. Its breeder, E. N. O'Rourke, says the plant is nematode resistant. Well adapted to the Deep South. Fairly tender.

Mission - A large black fig with light strawberry pulp. Brebas are pyriform with a prominent thick neck; main crop figs are smaller and more variable, pyriform. Well-adapted in California. Disappointing in the South since it is not very hardy. Often infected by mosaic that mottles the lees, but does not seem to effect the crop. Synonyms: Franciscana, Black Mission.

Nero - A large purplish-black fig with light pink pulp. Turbinate-pyriform with a flattened apex. Eye medium, open. Flor is fairly sweet and rich. Very good to excellent flor. Well-adapted in the Southwest and South. Synonyms: Barnisotte, Brogiotto Nero.

Neveralla - A medium bronze to brown fig with white to amber pulp. Brebas are pyriform with prominent neck; main crop figs are pyriform to turbinate with a thick neck. Variable stalks. Fair flor. Resembles Osborn Prolific. Synonyms: Archipel, Osborn, Osborne's Prolific.

Osborn Prolific - A medium bronze to brown fig with amber to light strawberry pulp. Main crop figs are pyriform with variable necks. Long slender stalks (to 1" long). Sweet and rich flor. Well-adapted

in all fig growing areas. Hardy. Very productive. Synonyms: Archipel, Hardy Prolific, Neveralla, Osborne, Rust.

Pasquale - A small purple fig with strawberry pulp distinguished by its late ripening--often in December or January. Oblate-spherical to pyriform with a short thick neck. Not hardy. Fruit is sweet and rich when not damaged by frost. Synonyms: Natalino, Vernino.

Petite Negri - A medium to large, black fig introduced by Mike McConkey of Edible Landscaping. Good flor. Its lees resemble those of Alma and it may be a sport of Alma.

Dark Varieties -- Royal Vineyard to Sal's Fig
Royal Vineyard - A medium bronze to brown fig with light strawberry pulp. Brebas are pyriform with a prominent thick and curving neck. A San Pedro type. Brebas only! Not worth growing in the South due to our late frosts which destroy the fruit in most years. A vigorous plant, it might deserve a trial in the North and West. Synonym: Drap d'Or

Sal's Fig - A small to medium unidentified black fig with good flor. Well-adapted in Northeast. A local nursery (no mail order) on Long Island introduced it. It is extremely hardy. Plants are vigorous and hardy.

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