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FIG BREEDING

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Abstract

A survey of the available literature indicates that commercial varieties of figs in Eurasia have originated as chance seedlings. While some, attempts at systematic fig breeding have been made. no records of marked improvement in varieties have been noted as a result of such breeding.

Numerous attempts to produce better parthenocarpic varieties in the southern United States have also largely shown discouraging results.

While thousands of fig seedlings of three types, common, Smyrna, and caprifigs, have been grown and distributed in California during the past four decades, none have so far become established commercially, although several have valuable characteristics.

The desirability of developing improved fig varieties by breeding, however, is still recognized in California. Both the United States Department of Agriculture and the California Experiment Station are growing numerous fig seedlings in the hope of finding a white variety as good as the Black Mission, a good Smyrna fig resistant to splitting, common figs immune to souring, and improved varieties of caprifigs.

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