

# Growing Fabulous Figs

Perhaps the oldest fruit recorded in cultivation, domestic figs (*Ficus carica*) have a long and honored history from the oldest civilizations to the present day.

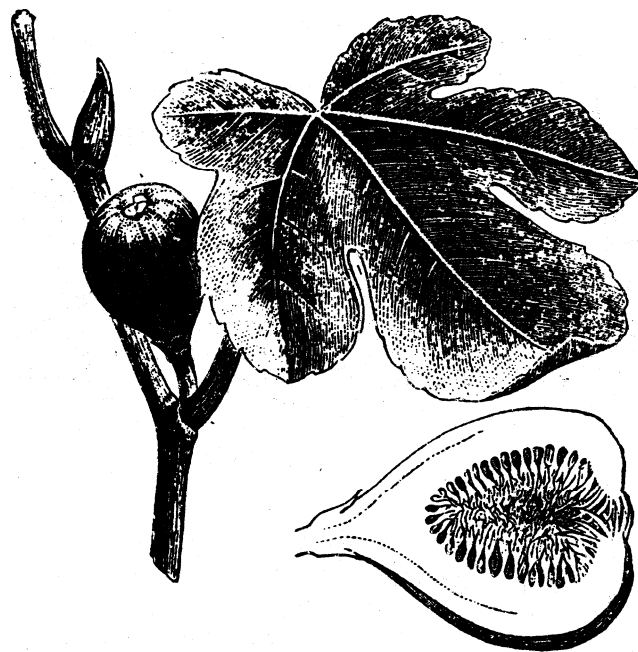
Figs are tough plants. Given lots of water and a well-balanced fertilizer, figs will provide a bounty of tasty fruit for the home grower. Figs should be planted in full sunlight. A well-balanced, timed-release fertilizer or compost and a side dressing of pelletized-lime should be added at time of planting and each spring thereafter. Provide a thick, organic mulch over the roots to protect from drought and winter cold. In cooler climates, figs do well planted on the sunny South or West side of a sheltering wall or fence.

In severe winters with single digit temperatures, fig plants may die back to ground level. If roots have been well mulched, the plant will come back from the roots and grow vigorously. Wait until warm weather brings bud break and remove any dead wood. New wood will produce fruit.

For extra cold protection outside, plant fig trees next to a wall or wind shelter, in a sunny south-facing location. In the fall, provide a cover of hay or straw to protect roots from severe temperatures.

Figs require no chemical sprays and are well suited to organic gardening. Like many plants, during periods of little rain, figs appreciate a good "hosing off" to remove dust and aryl insects that may be present.

Figs often produce fruit in the first year after planting. When a heavy crop forms, you may want to "thin" the fruit by removing excess small figs as they form.



In addition to producing fruit, fig plants rapidly grow into a handsome shrub or small tree -- size depending on the variety of fig, your location, and how much it is pruned -- that is an attractive accent in the landscape

Figs can also be grown in containers as a patio or porch plant if given sufficient container \*space and sunlight A 10-20 gallon heavy plastic pot or a half-barrel planter works reel as a container for fig trees. We recommend putting the planter on a wheeled dolly for easier moving. Many of our northern customers grow their 'Figs in containers and move inside to a protected location once they art dormant in the fall.

With only a little care, your fig tree will supply you with fruit each summer for many years. Enjoy!