

# Ray's Figs Ray's Figs

## The *New American Figs*

### American Fig Breeding: Achievements and Prospects

Ira J. Condit still holds the record for breeding the largest number of fig varieties--and is likely to hold that record for the foreseeable future. Growers and enthusiasts lack the political influence needed to obtain government funding for research and breeding since figs are a very minor fruit crop compared with apples, pears, peaches, plums, citrus, bananas, and even pineapples. The resources of commercial growers and enthusiasts are too modest to finance more than minor research into fig pests and diseases. There is very little money for breeding new varieties. Louise Ferguson is a researcher involved in the only program I am aware of--breeding a replacement for Calimyrna (Sari Lop). Those interested can check out her report latest report at: [http://fruitsandnuts.ucdavis.edu/louise/louise\\_f.html](http://fruitsandnuts.ucdavis.edu/louise/louise_f.html).

Fortunately, the efforts of Condit, his co-workers and a few other researchers produced a substantial number of new varieties in the 35 years between 1956 and 1991. Here is a listing of 231 new varieties **not included in Condit's Fig Varieties**:

- **B.A. 1**--A variety said to have been found on an unknown Texas A&M graduate student's abandoned test plot during the trials of Alma. Large and of good quality in the Gulf Coast states. May be less hardy than other varieties.
- **276-49**--In the trade, but not an official release from a breeding program.
- **Alma**--A Texas A&M hybrid of Allison (a synonym for Vernino) with Hamma, a North African caprifig with mixed *F. carica*/*F. palmata* parentage. Excellent quality, but very late ripening. Released in 1975.
- **Conadria**--The first of Condit's hybrid releases (using Adriatic and an edible caprifig). Released in 1957.
- **Deanna**--A Condit hybrid. In the trade, but apparently never officially released.
- **DiRedo**--One of Condit's favorites and one intended for commercial growers, also an Adriatic cross. Released in 1957. Not notably vigorous and not a commercial success.
- **Enderud**--An edible caprifig with very good flavor from the Riverside, CA program. Named for Julius E. Enderud, one of the researchers. Carried on the UCR Davis inventory as 228-20
- **Excel**--A Condit hybrid, using Kadota as the mother, named and released by Bill Storey in 1975. Excellent quality.
- **Flanders**--Another Condit hybrid from Adriatic, released 1965. Excellent quality. Rather unlike Condit's other productions since it is a striped fig with a long neck.
- **Golden Celeste**--In the trade, but not an official release from the Louisiana State University (LSU) breeding program.
- **Gulbun**--A Condit hybrid, in the trade since 1971. Available in the trade and in the UCR Davis inventory as 284-11.
- **Hollier**--In the trade, but not an official release from the LSU program. (May be the same as Guilbeau.)
- **Improved Celeste**-- Said to be better than the original, not yet released officially from the LSU program
- **Jurupa**--A very large greenish yellow fig with amber pulp. The brebas are particularly large. A Condit hybrid selected and named by Enderud. Good flavor.
- **K-7-11**--In the trade and said to be from Condit's breeding program.
- **LSU Everbearing**--In the trade, but not an official release from LSU.
- **LSU Gold**--In the trade, but not an official release from LSU. Reportedly a very fine fig.
- **LSU Improved Celeste**--No officially released from LSU. Reportedly the best LSU fig.
- **LSU Purple**--An O'Rourke hybrid of Hunt and a California caprifig identified as "C-1," released by LSU in 1991. Rather variable in quality and hardiness, but when it is good it is really good.
- **Nardine**--Another Condit hybrid. Yellow skin. Large with good flavor.
- **Saleeb**--A second edible caprifig with very good flavor. Named for Wadie F. Saleeb, one of the Riverside research team formed by Ira Condit and his successor, Bill Storey. Listed in the UCR Davis inventory as 271-1
- **Tena**--A medium yellow fig with amber to pink pulp. Very sweet, but not particularly rich in south Georgia. A Condit hybrid using Sari Lop (Calimyrna) as the mother.

- **Yvonne**--Still another Condit hybrid. Yellow skin. Large with good flavor.

## Fig Import Wish List

There are many good to excellent figs which have never been successfully introduced into the U.S. Condit bred a rather large number of new hybrids himself, but he also introduced or arranged the introduction of a number of good varieties, including **Zidi** and **Marabout**. There are still many other good ones left to import.

It is legal to import fig cuttings and plants, but one must obtain and complete an importation permit application/quarantine agreement with the U. S. Department of Agriculture. Additional information is available at the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service web site, [www.aphis.usda.gov/ppq/bats/permits/q37/plants.html](http://www.aphis.usda.gov/ppq/bats/permits/q37/plants.html). (Ever notice how long URLs can get?)

I identified some thirty-seven varieties after a fairly careful review of Condit's comments in *Fig Varieties: A Monograph*. Other enthusiasts would, I am sure, find other varieties. Arranged by place of origin, the varieties I would like to see imported are:

### Algeria

Azaich--Black skin with red pulp. Two crops. Productive with good quality. Main crop good fresh or dried.

### Egypt

Kahramani--Yellow skin with amber pulp, seedless. Two crops. Sweet

### France

Barbillone--Greenish violet skin with amber pulp. Bud sport of Marseilles. Very good medium to large brebas.

Bargemon--Pale violet skin with red pulp. Excellent fresh and dried.

Barnisotte Blanche--Yellow-green skin with red pulp, open eye. Main crop. Medium. Excellent fresh, good dried.

Becuelle--Reddish violet skin with red pulp. Two crops. Small, but very good. Main crop dries well.

Bellona--Purplish black skin with red pulp, small closed eye. Main crop. Excellent.

Cordelière--Yellow-green skin with rosy pulp. Brebas are good. Main crop figs are small and of only fair quality.

Dorée--Golden skin with salmon to rosy pulp. Brebas fair. Main crop is good and dries well.

Franche Paillard--Violet brown to violet green skin with red pulp. Two crops. Sparse crop of very good brebas. Prolific main crop is very juicy, good.

Grosse Jaune--Light green to golden-yellow skin with bright red pulp. Main crop. Rather late.

Mouissonne--Violet to dark violet skin with deep red pulp. Two crops. Medium sized. Sparse crop of good brebas. Abundant main crop is good fresh.

Peau Dure--Two crops. Medium-sized brebas are brown flushed with olive green and have reddish pulp. Very good with agreeable acidic undertones. Smaller main crop figs are olive tinged with violet. Resist rain damage and are excellent for drying.

Peconjudo--Skin is yellowish green tinged with violet; pulp is red. Main crop only. Small to medium figs with small, closed eyes. Good quality.

Rose Noire--Bronze skin with amber to rose pulp. Main crop only. Very good.

Sang de Lièvre (Hare's Blood)--Two crops. Brebas are bright green with blood red pulp. Sweet, good. Main crop figs are green flushed with bronze and have dark red pulp. Very good.

### Greece

Pregussata--Dark brown skin with red pulp. Main crop. Sweet and rich. Imported into U.S. in late 19th century, but lost or discarded.

### India

Poona--Purple skin with rosy pulp. Prolific in India. Medium figs. Sweet and well flavored.

## Italy

Dattero--Yellowish green skin with light rose pulp. Main crop. Very good, especially for drying.

Fracazzano--Yellow-green skin with amber pulp. Two crops. Brebas are sweet, good and of medium size. Main crop figs are smallish, but very sweet.

Lucano--Citron yellow skin with brown pulp. Main crop. Sweet and agreeable. Mostly used fresh, but suitable for drying.

Paradiso--Two crops. Brebas have green skin and light rosy pulp. Exquisite flavor. Main crop has greenish yellow skin with wine red pulp. Very sweet and best for fresh use.

Pissaluto--Greenish yellow to golden yellow skin with red pulp. Main crop. Medium, small eye and firm skin more suitable than most for shipping. Good, especially fresh.

Signora--Almost black skin, but yellowish rose towards the stalk. Pulp is pale red. Main crop. Excellent, both fresh and dried.

## Japan

Horaigaki--Violet purple skin with pink pulp. Main crop. Imported in 1940, but discarded--probably as a result of anti-Japanese feelings after the attack on Pearl Harbor. Its quality in the very short trials at Riverside, CA was said to be only fair. New trials may reveal an excellent fig. May also be better adapted in the Southeast.

## Palestine (the area shared by Israel and the future Palestinian entity)

Hdadi—Green skin with amber pulp. Closed eye. Sweet.

Khdari—Green skin with pink pulp. Large brebas are sweet, rich and very juicy.

Kharroubi—Purplish black skin with light pink pulp. Main crop is late with very sweet, large figs with good flavor.

Hmari—Green skin with light red pulp. Main crop. Very early. Medium, closed eye, good flavor. Ships well.

Mwazi—Greenish skin with purple ribs and amber pulp. Two crops. Good breba crop. Main crop figs are also large, sweet and delicious.

Tbani—Greenish yellow skin with red pulp. Main crop. Large, sweet and good.

## Portugal

Badalhouse—Greenish yellow skin with carmine pulp. Brebas. Large, very good.

Moscatel Branco—Two crops. Small breba crop with yellowish green fruit with red pulp. Main crop is heavy. Fruit is dark green with red pulp. Very good.

Rei—Two crops. Brebas are large, green with carmine pulp. Main crop figs are medium, greenish violet with light red pulp. Very good.

São Luiz—Violet black skin with light red pulp. Main crop. Very good.

## Spain

Carabaseta—Clear green skin with light red pulp. Main crop. Very sweet and highly flavored. Dried, they have an especially good quality.

Roja—Reddish brown skin with amber pulp. Two crops. Both brebas and main crop are large and of very good quality. Main crop resists rain damage.

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