

# Figs

Figs are a versatile fruit with a distinctive appearance. They can be planted in a variety of locations, from an accent plant in your garden to an edible patio plant in a container. Either way, follow a few simple rules and you'll be on your way to growing wonderful figs.

Only a few varieties of figs can be grown in our Zone 7 climate. Even with these varieties, you will probably need to cover them in extremely cold weather. They prefer full sun but will tolerate light shade.

Figs are not fussy as to soil type and are relatively drought tolerant. Watering during dry months will, however, help to assure good fruiting. Fertilize at the beginning of the growing season with a low nitrogen fertilizer.

If you are going to grow figs in a container, be sure to pick one large enough for the plant. A 15-20 gallon pot or barrel with drain holes in the bottom will work fine. Place 1-2" of gravel in the bottom for drainage, fill with pure topsoil and plant. Water in well and place a layer of mulch on top. During the winter months, you will either need to cover container grown figs or move them to a sheltered place.

Figs go dormant in winter and do not need sun or water during this time. In spring, uncover, prune, fertilize and water.

Figs depend on ideal spring and early summer weather conditions and no late frosts to fruit well. Figs typically peak fruiting from July/August through the first frost. Figs grow on low, open trees, with no thorns and soft leaves, so they're very easy to pick! The ripe figs will separate easily from the tree when you lift them upwards from their normal drooping position. The ripe figs definitely droop a bit and feel softer. Unripe figs are harder, more firmly attached and do not droop. Figs must be picked ripe from the trees, since they do not ripen once picked.

## Varieties

**Brown Turkey:** Medium to large fruit with brown-violet skin. It is a mid-season fruiter.

**Mission or Black Mission:** This fig is a deep purple which darkens to a rich black when dried.

**Celeste:** Fruits are about the size of an egg, a purplish-brown when ripe, with a dark, sweet, moist, purple flesh inside.

