

Wallsend Nurseries

95 Lake Rd Wallsend 2287
Ph: 49 501066 Fax: 49 516960 Email: gardens1@tpg.com.au

Figs

The fig is a fast growing deciduous tree that will usually grow to approximately 4m tall though it can grow much larger under ideal conditions.

The fig is an unusual fruit in that it is not really a fruit at all, but, in fact, more like an inside out flower. This is called an invaginated inflorescence.....phew.

The "fruit" is round or pear shaped and colour ranges from green to brown or purple depending upon the variety. They are eaten fresh or dried and make wonderful jams.

There are many varieties of figs available to the home gardener. They don't require cross pollination with other fig varieties so you'll only need one tree which is more than adequate to supply an average family with plentiful fruit.

Brown Turkey.

Has purple brown skin and pink-brown flesh. Ripens from January to March. Very sweet flavour.

Preston Prolific.

A variety with green brown skin and amber to white flesh. Ripens from December to late April.

Black Genoa.

A purple skinned, red fleshed variety which ripens from December to February. One of the most popular figs for the home garden. Makes superb jam.

Figs trees require a light, well drained loamy soil. They do not like acid soils and do best when the Ph is neutral. They prefer a warm, dry climate, but need plenty of water during the heat of Summer to produce good quality fruit. Close to the coast the fruit will often sour and split as a result of water entering the "eye" at the base of the fruit.

Figs are very vigorous growers and should be planted 6-8m away from other trees.

Propagation is by cuttings taken in Winter from 1 year old wood. We stock only cutting grown named varieties suitable for the Newcastle area to ensure best results.

Dig the holes for planting wide and shallow. This is particularly important where the soil is clay based. Plenty of compost needs to be added and dug well into the soil as well. A dressing of lime is usually necessary to avoid acid soils which Figs do not like. If in doubt have a pH test done on your soil.

Figs need a dressing of a suitable fertilizer (eg. Citrus Fertilizer) each Winter before the end of August Apply this at the rate of 500 grams per year of the trees age until the tree is 10 years old, then continue to apply at the 10 year rate for the rest of the trees' life. Be sure to spread the fertilizer evenly around the drip line of the tree and do not let it accumulate around the base of the trunk as burning will occur. Mulch around the base of the trees so as to retain moisture during hot periods. Sugar cane mulch or well rotted manures are ideally suited for this purpose.

Figs bear most of the main crop on new wood but some fruit is often borne on older wood early in the season.

Pruning is not often needed as the trees naturally form a well balanced framework. Older trees often slow down as they age and can be pruned severely to promote new wood and better cropping.

Bearing will commence at quite an early stage in the trees' life, starting from as little as 2 years old and reaching full bearing capacity by the time the trees are 7 years old.

Figs ripen over a long period and should be picked every few days. The fresh fruit does not store well so it is best eaten as soon as possible. For dried fruit and fruit intended for jam making the figs are left on the tree to develop fully before harvesting.

The main pests of figs are fruit fly, fig leaf beetle and fig twig borer. Control using appropriate measures as necessary for the fruit fly and leaf beetle. Rogor® cannot be used on figs so use Baythroid® will control the beetle. Fruit fly baits are recommended as is the application of fruit bags. These are fine mesh bags that are placed over the fruit and serve to protect it from being stung by the adult fruit fly.

Tree surgery and pruning is the only way to control the fig stem borer as chemicals are not effectively delivered to the insect pests inside the trees timber.

Figs have no recognised disease problems in NSW.