

# Growing Figs and Pomegranates in San Jacinto County



# Figs



- Ancient fruit mentioned in the Bible;
- Believed to be propagated by the Sumerians as early as 2500 B.C.;
- Used in lieu of sugar;
- Can be eaten fresh or canned.

# Best Varieties for S J CO



- Texas Everybearing: (Brown Turkey) medium, purple fig
- **Mature Height:**
- 12-15 ft.
- **Mature Width:**
- 8-10 ft.
- **Sunlight:**
- Full Sun
- **Drought Tolerance:**
- Good
- **Chill Hours:**
- 100
- **Botanical Name:**
- *Ficus Carica*
  
- **Celeste:** small to medium, violet skin with extremely sweet, juicy white pulp. Good fresh or dried. A favorite for container gardening.
- **Brown Turkey:** medium to large, maroon-brown skin with sweet, juicy pulp. All purpose usage.



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# Fig Botany



- The fig actually bears its flowers inside the fruit and relies upon wasps to crawl inside to pollinate them. This unique fertilization process is called *parthenocarpy*.

There are hundreds of varieties of figs, ranging in color from nearly black to almost white, and only the female fruits are edible. The green varieties are normally reserved for drying.



- There are four distinct horticultural types of figs, but climatic factors preclude the cultivation of all but the common fig in Texas and other states along the Gulf coast. "Fruit" of common figs are parthenocarpic (formed without fertilization) and are actually fleshy stem tissue with no seed
- The characteristics of the fruit "eye" is a major consideration in adaptation. Varieties with an open eye may be susceptible to dried fruit beetle feeding or souring when rain enters the interior of the fruit.



- **Figs can survive at lower temperatures than other members of the genus Ficus.**
- The fig's flesh is amber to pink with dark mahogany-purple skin, and is **delicious for fresh eating as well as for jellies, jams, cookies, cakes and dried**

# Harvest Time and Saving



- Choose figs when they are ripe. They should be firm, but not hard and easily pull off the tree. If they smell the least bit sour, they are already beginning to sour.
- Once they are harvested, you may keep for a few days in the refrigerator. They need to be canned or frozen within three days of harvest.
- Figs make excellent jam, jelly or fig syrup. They can be frozen. Wipe clean, lay on cookie sheet on a single layer and freeze. Once frozen, take off of cookie sheet and place in a large Ziplock bag and place back into the freezer. May be unfrozen at 30 – 45secs in the microwave.



# Propagating



- Figs are one of the easiest fruit crops to propagate. Hardwood cuttings taken when the plants are fully dormant readily root and are most commonly used for propagation of figs. Cuttings should be six to ten inches in length and approximately one-half to one inch in diameter. Place the cuttings in a warm, humid environment such as wrapping them in a moist paper towel and placed in a polyethylene bag for 10-14 days to encourage callus formation. Cuttings can then be planted in pots in a commercial potting media to encourage rooting and shoot formation. Softwood cuttings can also be used for propagation, but a mist system is usually needed for successful plant production.

# Pomegranates



- The pomegranate, *Punica granatum*, is native from Iran to the Himalayas in northern India and has been cultivated since ancient times throughout the Mediterranean region of Asia, Africa and Europe.



- Pomegranates are part of the Lythraceae family which includes about 620 species. The family also includes the widely cultivated crape myrtle trees. While pomegranate can be trained as a small tree, it is more commonly grown as a bushy shrub. The leaves are deciduous, usually glossy and dark green. The plant usually has spines (thorns) along its branches. The fruit may be yellow to bright red in color.

# Best Varieties for S J Co



- Wonderful
- Salavatski
- Surh Anor
- Al – Sirin – Nar
- Russian 18
- Spanish Sweet Uvalde
- Sumbar

# Requirements and Planting



- Cold Hardy
- Should be grown in full sun
- Plant 12 to 15' apart
- Remove packing soil and plant in hole 2xs larger than root ball
- Water in thoroughly
- Keep moist but not standing water

# Propagation



- Pomegranates root readily from hardwood cutting taken in winter when pruning. Size of rooting wood does not seem to matter although pencil sized cuttings are easiest to work with. Cuttings should be about 6 to 14 inches long, dipped in rooting hormone and stuck in containers with a well drained potting soil. The cuttings can be left outside to callus. In spring after growth commences the cuttings can be stepped up into gallon containers and allowed to grow 4 to 6 weeks before going to the field.

# Harvesting



- Harvest Fruit ripening normally occurs 6 months after bloom with the best fruit development occurring during high temperatures. The fruit is non-climacteric and should only be picked after it has reached full maturity. Fruit ready to pick may make a metallic sound when tapped lightly. Fruit are harvested by cutting the fruit from the plant as opposed to pulling. Cut the fruit off as close as possible to avoid leaving a stem which could rub and injure other fruit.

# Resources



- For More Information <http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/fruit-nut>