



Figs

One of the oldest fruits grown by humans is the fig. Fortunately for us in Central Texas, figs are easy to grow. They do not need very rich soil, but do need good drainage. Figs do not require pollination to bear fruit, and they *start* bearing in just 2 – 4 years.

Choose a location that receives full sun, at least 6 – 8 hours a day. Morning sun is especially important, so that dew dries quickly from the leaves. Otherwise, they are prone to rust disease. Give each tree space that allows the tree to grow 12-20 feet wide. Since they can occasionally be injured by frost, a location on the south side of a building can provide extra warmth in winter.

Prepare the soil with plenty of good quality compost before planting, such as our **Lady Bug brand Revitalizer compost**. If you're planting in clay soil, make a raised bed by also mixing in **Lady Bug brand Hill Country Garden Soil**. Consult our handout *Planting & Maintenance Guide for Fruits, Nuts, & Berries* for more information.

Fig trees do not like heavy pruning. For example, mature Celeste trees will produce fewer fruits the spring after a winter pruning. Weak, diseased, or dead limbs should be pruned out in winter. Fig trees prefer regular composting instead of fertilizing. Apply **Lady Bug Sylvan Formula mulch** in the spring and fall, maintaining a three-inch layer over the entire root zone.

The fruit must ripen on the tree. Harvest figs when the fruit changes color and becomes soft. The stem should separate easily. Consider using **Holographic Scare Tape, Guard'n Eyes, or Bird-X** to keep the birds from harvesting the fruit before you do. Try hanging old CDs to help scare birds away.

After harvest and heading into fall, reduce watering. This will encourage the tree to go dormant. A dormant tree with no leaves will survive winter with minimal damage.

Fig Varieties for Central Texas – Size of fruit; Ripening time; Fruit quality & flavor; Skin color; Eye; Other qualities & information.

Alma – Medium; July to August; High quality, rich, sweet flesh with a light tan color and few seeds; “Unattractive” green to brown skin; Moderately closed eye is sealed with honey-like resin that resists souring and resists the dried fruit beetle; Moderately vigorous, very productive and productive at an early age; Fruit eaten fresh or processed; The most frost-sensitive variety listed here.

Celeste – Small to medium; Mid to late June; Firm, juicy, rich, sweet white flesh, shading to rose in the center; Purple-brown skin; Tightly closed eye resists souring and the dried fruit beetle; Large, vigorous tree; Very productive; Excellent for fresh-eating and preserves; The most cold-hardy of all Texas varieties.

Brown Turkey – Medium to large; Late June, continuing to ripen through August; Good quality, nearly seedless, sweet, mild-flavored, reddish-pink flesh; Reddish-brown and purplish skin; Moderately closed eye resists souring, but very rainy weather can cause souring or cracking; Vigorous, very large and productive tree; Has the longest ripening season of all recommended varieties; Good for making preserves; Can recover from freeze injury by producing a fair crop on vegetative growth the next season; Some consider this the same tree as Texas Everbearing.

Texas Everbearing – Medium to large; June through August; Reddish-pink, almost seedless flesh with a mild sweet flavor; Reddish-brown skin; Moderately closed eye that reduces souring, but may sour or crack in wet weather; The most common variety in Central Texas; Vigorous, large, productive tree. Some consider this the same variety as Brown Turkey.

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