





Fig (*Ficus carica*)

Type	Deciduous/ Evergreen	Height x Width (metres)	Spacing (metres)	Pollinator	Soil type	Sun	Moisture	Shelter	Plant	Harvest
	D	3–6 x 5	4–6	N				N	Autumn to early spring	Autumn

Site

- Needs maximum sun, a sheltered and frost-free site, with a long, hot, dry summer for the fruit to fully mature.
- Likes soil that retains moisture but is well drained.
- In colder areas, plant against a sunny wall that reflects warmth.
- Has wide-spreading, invasive roots – don't plant it close to the house or plumbing. Put rubble in the bottom of the planting hole to restrict the roots, or you could grow it in a container.

Care

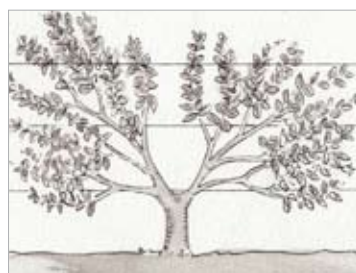
- Easy to grow, but must be protected from birds when fruit is ripening.
- Plant between autumn and early spring.
- *Container-grown trees* – water regularly, and re-pot in winter every 3 years. Shade the sides of the container in summer to keep the roots cool.
- *Trees in the ground* – water well while young and when fruit is developing.
- Weed carefully to avoid damaging the surface roots.
- Self-fertile.

Vase shape



Adapted from *Fruit Gardening in NZ*

Fan shape



Adapted from *How to Make a Forest Garden*

Training & pruning

- Train as a sprawling *vase* shape with several strong fruiting arms, or as a *fan* against a sunny wall (see 'Part 2 – Training & Pruning' for details).
- Fruits mainly on the tips of the previous season's growth. Don't shorten them, or they won't fruit the next season.
- If pruning is needed, cut out half of the previous season's growth.
- Keep the tree open to allow maximum sunshine and light. Don't prune hard – it stimulates too much leafy growth.
- In early summer, pinch back young side shoots to five leaves.

Harvest

- Bears fruit within a year or two.
- Harvest the fully coloured fruit in late summer as it begins to split. Pick fruit gently so it doesn't bruise.
- Eat fresh, freeze whole, or dry in gentle sun for 4 or 5 days.
- Use for pies, desserts, baking, jam, preserves, syrup, and in savoury dishes.
- Remove any fruit that didn't ripen this season BUT leave the small fruits close to the end of the shoots – these are next year's harvest.

Health

- Good levels of B vitamins, iron, magnesium, manganese and fibre.

Recommended varieties

Early: Brown Turkey

Mid: Brunswick, San Pedro No 2

Late: Lesa, Preston Prolific, French Sugar