

Ficus carica

Moraceae

N.W. Turkey, Eastern Mediterranean

Ar: *Tin*

Eng: *Adriatic or common fig, Smyrna fig*

Beles -telian

Tr: *Daero-telian*

Ecology: This fig is a native of Asia Minor but spread very early to the Mediterranean region where it is characteristic of dry-farming agriculture. In Eritrea, it grows in secondary scrub and at forest edges, 1,000-2,400 m. Though not very common, it has been widely cultivated in the central highlands and eastern escarpment, particularly in and around Asmara, Semenawi-bahri, Nakfa and Halhale.

Uses: Fruit (fresh, dried), medicine (sap), shade.

Description: A markedly deciduous shrub or small tree 4-10 m. **BARK:** Grey-brown. White latex in all parts irritates the skin. **LEAVES:** Simple but with 3-5 rounded lobes to 18 x 20 cm, heart-shaped at the base, leaf edges slightly toothed at lobe tips, 3-5 veins from the base, a leaf stalk to 10 cm. **FRUIT:** Figs from female flowers, green-brown and swollen, to 7 cm, wider at the tip. Young figs develop with the new shoots. The pulp around the seeds has a high sugar content and is very tasty.

Propagation: Figs grow easily from cuttings.

Seed:

treatment:

storage:

Management: If introducing figs into a new area, use "Adriatic" figs.

Remarks: The common "Adriatic" fig has seedless fruits that develop without pollination (parthenogenetically). "Smyrna" figs require pollination by the wild caprifig. Wild figs produce three different kinds of fig during the year and there is a complex relationship with the pollinating fig wasp. The edible female figs of the "Smyrna" type only ripen if they are pollinated by the wasp *Blastophaga psenes*. In orchards of "Smyrna" fig trees, wild or male "caprificus" are planted alongside to attract the wasps or wild flowering branches are hung in the branches of the "Smyrna" trees when the fig wasps are about to emerge. This fig is known to have been grown in Egypt before 4000 BC.

