



the Urban Scion Post

a publication of the Seattle Tree Fruit Society,
a chapter of the Western Cascade Fruit Society

President's Letter

Well.....Sorry to report that we cannot be certain when we can begin meeting again. This month would normally signal our return to monthly meetings. That will not happen. We can hope for better news in October, but that prospect is still uncertain. Some of the other clubs in our network have been meeting via Zoom conferencing. We are hoping to adopt this method of connecting to our membership, and hope to have something in place by our scheduled October meeting date (10/10/20). Our annual fall fruit show would normally occur on this date.

Several members have visited the demonstration orchard at Magnuson. Many of the trees are now producing. Please go by and help yourselves to this fruit. The Italian Plums are at their peak.

I've tried to keep connected with other fruit hobbyists over the past few months and have visited several. It's a welcome respite from all that we have to deal with during these times. I hope everyone is doing the same. I recently had the pleasure of visiting with Chris Homanics. Chris has given several interesting presentations to our club in the past. He has since moved back into the area & hard at work with his passion –experimenting and propagating common and unusual species and cultivars of food plants. One focus of his is selecting for healthful benefits of fruits and vegetables. As an example, he is trialing different corn selections, seeking strains with high lysine and methionine. He has been trialing potato varieties for many years, with similar goals. A recent project involved the Anthracnose resistance of different apple cultivars. In addition, Chris is experimenting with unusual fruits, selecting for hardiness in this area. I could elaborate, but all I want to say is that we, the “layman” fruit hobbyists, appreciate what Chris, and his contemporaries, are doing.

There are others who are doing similar work, without the promise of monetary benefit. For instance, Kiwibob Glanzman has tackled a daunting task: attempting to combine genetics of *Actinidia deliciosa* with *Actinidia arguta*, with the goal of isolating the most desirable characteristics of each into one plant. Several other locals are doing similar work in their own way. We appreciate them all.

In addition to our local “plant breeders,” there are many locals who have experimented with different species or cultural techniques, then have shared among us what they have learned. Mark Lee is growing a red-fleshed pear (“Summer Blood Birne”), as well as a hybrid “purple” aronia (*Aronia x prunifolia*). He posted his observations of the STFS Facebook page. Ben Nguyen has trialed over 200 varieties of figs at his home in Renton, and has published his observations to his “Fig Addiction” Facebook group. Gudrun U. is growing, and eating, over 100 common and uncommon plants this summer, including Goumiberry, Chilean Guava, Oregon Grape, and *Luma apiculata*, as well as a few other species that I tasted, but forgot their names. And there are many more like-minded folks. You are probably one of them. I'm happy to be connected with this group of people with such interests.

Until next month.....

Regards, Mike Ewanciw

Urban Scion Post

Inside this issue:

President's Letter	2
September 2020 by M. Tilbury	3
The Orchard at Sunrise	4-7
Pumpkin Flour	7
Picking Pears	8-9
Fantastic Figs	9-14
Fruitful Kitchen	15
About Seattle Tree Fruit Society	16
Officers, Directors & Membership	16



On the cover

*Figs grown in California.
Photo: California Rare Fruit Growers
Association, September, 2007, courtesy of
Encanto Farms Nursery.*

September 2020 by Marilyn Tilbury

Weatherwise, wasn't this a wonderful summer? Those vine ripened tomatoes, plums, early apples and table grapes, and now corn on the cob, yum. Surely this was *some* compensation for all the stresses in our lives now.

Still, it was also another dry summer. Be sensitive to rhodys with drooping, curled leaves. Fruit trees whose leaves are getting that dull green look are quietly saying "water now, please." Pear trellis rust has spread to most of our pears trees by now and is an additional stress to them. A deep watering the equivalent of one inch of rain a week does the trick.

Phlox is a good indicator plant—mildewed foliage is a sign of too dry soil. You might see mildew on cherry leaves now. If you are lucky enough to have acreage, watch out for drought stressed conifers like grand firs. It's heart breaking to see mature, otherwise healthy firs die, and this species seems more susceptible than most to our slightly warmer and drier summers.

NOAA is predicting a La Niña winter, bad news for fire prone California which tends to be dry in La Niñas. For us, expect a cool, wet winter, perhaps even a good ski season, but precipitation doesn't add up until the October-November rainy period so supplemental water now is still needed.

The timing is perfect now to plant winter cover crops while the soil is still warm. Legumes such as Austrian field peas are "two-fers" in that they provide a bit of nitrogen to the soil as they grow. Vetch, crimson clover, annual rye and some mixes of these are also available. The only drawback is that they all must be turned under at least by next April. The benefits are soil nutrients retained under rainfall and additional organic matter.

Now is a good time to keep a beady eye on your winter pears. Summer pears are easy: a few fallen pears means they need to be picked if the fruit still hanging is easily separated from the branch when held at a horizontal posi-

tion, then stored in a cool place for a couple weeks. But winter pears need planning ahead. When a few pears start to fall from the sunny side, it's time to make space in a fridge to chill fruit for 4 weeks, then finish ripening a few at a time on your kitchen counter. Place a note on the fridge to remind you when their chill period is finished.

Do you have friends or relatives living in citrus country in Florida? They've probably told you about the devastation caused by the arrival of citrus greening disease in 2005. Whole orchards have been bulldozed out after trees died. This disease, also called HLB for Huanglongbing, is a bacterium which attacks the phloem of citrus trees worldwide and was discovered in home orchards in California in 2012. Since that state now accounts for 80% of US citrus production, it was terrible news.



It is spread by infected sucking insects called Asian citrus psyllids, and defenses include repeatedly spraying antibiotics against the disease and insecticides against the insects. This is expensive and only partially successful. But here's the good news: UC Riverside has developed a natural control which can be either sprayed several times a season or injected into trees. The edible finger limes of Australia are tolerant of this disease, and UC researchers discovered this fruit has antimicrobial peptides which can be readily utilized to allow citrus crops to continue to be grown commercially worldwide.

Update on the Asian giant hornet: on August 18 patrons enjoying outside dining at a Birch Bay restaurant photographed an AGH which was a curious fly-in visitor. It flew off without incident. A day later a dead worker (non-reproductive) AGH was found in a bait trap in the greater Birch Bay area. WSDA has deployed live capture traps in the area and hopes to attach a tiny radio tag developed at the UW to a live hornet and follow it home to its nest. They're oh, so close! Let's hope they are able to stop this invasive insect from becoming established here. BC has so far found only a single dead AGH near Langley in the spring though a whole nest was destroyed in Nanaimo on Vancouver Island last fall.



THE ORCHARD AT SUNRISE



Story by Laure Jansen
Photos by Laure Jansen
Aerial by Peter Ray



The Vashon Island Fruit Club has maintained a research and demonstration orchard since its creation seven years ago. An orchard manager coordinates volunteer efforts and oversees research projects, and upkeep of the orchard database which tracks varieties that are grown. Volunteers work at the orchard on a weekly basis, and it is open for tours and pruning and grafting events. Over 220 different varieties of fruit are grown at the orchard with ongoing trials of varieties new to the region. The orchard is located at Sunrise Ridge, a property dedicated to activities that improve human health.

This spring, Western Cascade Fruit Society, our parent organization, awarded a grant to VIFC to update the orchard signage to provide information to home fruit grower enthusiasts about research conducted in the Sunrise orchard.

The VIFC Research and Demonstration Orchard (hereafter referred to as the Sunrise Orchard) was created “to research, demonstrate and be a repository of successful fruit varieties and fruit growing techniques on Vashon” and to further the VIFC’s mission “to promote the successful growing of fruit in an environmentally responsible manner, through education and enthusiasm, supports fruit research relevant to our region, and thereby improves fruit production and fruit products on Vashon-Maury islands.” It also promotes the primary objective of the Western Cascade Fruit Society to “bring together new and experienced fruit growers who will promote the science, cultivation and pleasure of growing fruit bearing trees, vines and plants in the home landscape.”

In the seven years since its creation, the orchard has provided opportunities for many research projects in growing fruit (see righthand sidebar). A beautiful espalier structure was constructed to showcase a hundred varieties of unique, heritage and interesting apple cultivars. A impressive grape arbor was designed by local craftsman and built with wood harvested and milled on Vashon Island. A special structure shelters a nectarine and an apricot from rain moisture that might promote damage from leaf curl fungi.

Various fruit types are represented in each section of the orchard: a plum thicket with eight varieties; a cranberry installation with three varieties and seven cultivars; three preferred cultivars of strawberries grown in raised beds; five cultivars of hardy almonds; six cultivars of peaches; too many apples to count; ten pear cultivars, several mulberries, currants, raspberries, black raspberries, with new plantings of pawpaws and nut trees planned.

RESEARCH PROJECTS AT THE SUNRISE ORCHARD

- Growing apples on various espalier systems
- Amending soils
- Composting for orchards
- Using stone fruit shelters to protect from rain
- Growing plums in a thicket
- Choosing suitable root stock
- Growing almonds in the Pacific Northwest (5 cultivars)
- Using inter-stems
- Controlling pests holistically (e.g., owl house, daffodils, netting, etc.)
- Mulching (e.g., ramial woodchips)
- Trialing new and heritage (e.g., Olympic berries) varieties
- Grafting, including top working
- Growing strawberries in above-ground structures
- Fig berm
- Cranberry installation
- Use of pollinators, including mason bees
- Companion planting for pollinator support and disease control
- Water management including rain catchment

Healthy soil is a topic of great importance at the Sunrise Orchard. Mulch is continually applied to planting beds to encourage mycorrhizal and fungal population growth. There is an extensive composting system, composed of numerous bins of compost-in-process and finished compost, both garden compost and orchard compost. In 2020, cover crops of fava bean, red clover and field peas were planted for weed abatement and soil improvement. Ruminant manure, specifically from Vashon alpacas, is

used as a low-nitrogen fertilizer, providing a local and verifiably non-toxic input.

The orchard is watered by drip irrigation controlled by zonal electronic timers. This allows for more water on the nursery trees, new plantings, and vaccinium beds, and less water on established trees.

Pollinators and pest predators are encouraged in this orchard. A mason bee house is installed on the south side of the grape arbor, and a bat house constructed on the top of the east side of the grape arbor. Future plantings of later season flowering plants are planned to provide additional forage for pollinators after the fruit blossom season has passed.

So many interesting things are going on at the Sunrise Orchard that it seemed a good time to get some of the information out to members and the general public. To this end, the orchard managers applied for a signage grant from WCFS this spring, and were happily awarded funds to help with the realization of education goals of signage, maps and handouts.

The new signage will include maps of the orchard and information about trials of new varieties, composting techniques being tested, temporary plantings, proposed future research, and information about upcoming tours and demonstrations. During weekly work sessions, open houses, pruning and grafting workshops and work parties, individuals will be able to gain information about research and best practices that can be applied to their own orchards.

One of the most significant elements of the new signage is the main kiosk, incorporated into the deer fencing at the orchard entrance, which provides two sides to dispense information. The outer side of the kiosk will be used to provide general information to the public, including the purpose of the orchard; current research projects; upcoming lectures and open houses; volunteer opportunities; and membership applications. The inner side of the kiosk will be used for posting information relevant to researchers and orchard volunteers as well as more specific information about ongoing research projects. A QR code on the entrance sign will link to the VIFC webpage for additional information.

Eventually, ten waterproof brochure boxes will be installed

to provide handouts. Specifically, these boxes will be provided to house orchard maps, self-guided tour instructions, techniques used by the VIFC to amend soils (use of compost, camelid manure, rock dust, mycorrhizae, bio-char, mulch, etc.), successful varieties, and VIFC membership applications).

Photos on page 4, from top left, each row

Row 1: Nectarine shelter; highbush cranberry; single apple espaliers; strawberries in raised beds; grapes with protective bags.

Row 2: "Enterprise" apple with fall bloom; sample of apple varieties; double reverse cordon espalier (on left)

Row 3: Grape arbor with mason bee house; "Niwot" black raspberry\

Row 4: Chives providing protection from scab fungi; aerial site map; fig berm with fieldstones

Row 5: grape arbor with bat house; cranberry installation; new entrance kiosk; composting info board; complete composting system

Below: orchard manager Emily MacRae harvesting apricots from stone fruit shelter.



PUMPKIN FLOUR

by Ed Scullywest



Ever wondered what to do with all those pumpkins? Last year we had a dozen, which isn't out of the ordinary for a vine. After a couple of pies and Jack-O-Lanterns we still had eight.

We dehydrate a lot of fruits and vegetables so I decided to give it a try on the pumpkins. Here is the process I used.

Split pumpkins, remove seeds, and innards.

Bake at 350 until done.

Scoop out pumpkin from skin. Place on dehydrator trays. Decided to leave the pumpkin in large chunks as small pieces stick to the trays and are hard to remove. Kind of flatten them out to about $\frac{3}{4}$ ".

Dehydrate for 2-3 days or more, they take a long time.

Put into a blender, pulse to break them up into small pieces, about pea size or smaller. Don't blend too long, you don't want to heat them up. This process is a little messy with pumpkin dust, keep the lid on and do really small batches.

Our eight pumpkins fit into one quart canning jar. We put a lid on it to keep it dry, it still smells great a year later.

The ratio to rehydrate is 1 part flour to 4 parts water. A little pumpkin pie spice really peps it up. We've made muffins several times for STFS and they always disappear. It also tastes good in oatmeal, cookies, soups, stews.



PICKING PEARS

By Robert A. Norton, Jackie King, Gary A. Mouton, WSU

A frequent question every year as fall approaches is **"When should I pick my pears?"** Most people know that if you let pears ripen on the tree, they are likely to break down at the core and be soft and mushy when eaten or canned.

Commercial growers use a pressure tester to determine proper pear maturity for harvest. By determining the pressure necessary to puncture the flesh, they can determine when pears are ripe enough to pick, **but not overripe.** What do you do if you don't have such an instrument?

In most years we can determine within a week or two, when individual pear varieties should be getting close to proper maturity. The following table should cover Western Washington fairly well. Choose the earlier date for Southwest Washington and the later date for more northerly or colder areas.

The next step in determining picking readiness is ease of fruit removal. If you notice several pears dropping **from the tree, you may already be too late, but it's a pretty sure sign** they should all be picked.

Better yet, every few days as you approach the **harvest period shown above, give the pears the "lift test."** Putting your index finger on the stem, lift the pear from its hanging position to a horizontal or flat position, perhaps with a slight twist. If the fruit snaps off cleanly between the stem and the twig, the pears are ready to strip from the tree. If you have to wrench off the fruit, either breaking the twig or the fruit stem, the fruit is probably not ready. Note that on larger trees, fruit growing in the top often ripens earlier than fruit in the shaded interior.

Certain late ripening pear varieties such as Anjou,

Bosc and Comice may not ripen properly if just picked off the tree and allowed to ripen naturally. These varieties, particularly Anjou, need 3 - 4 weeks of storage at 32° - 45°F. This can be done in a refrigerator or possibly in a cool root cellar. Some kind of wrapping to reduce shriveling is a good idea.

How about Asian pears? These are easy since they ripen on the tree. Simply sample them from time to time as they ripen from greenish to various shades of yellow or orange. When they taste **good, pick 'em.** You don't have to pick them all at once, but if they are left on the tree too long, they may develop a "winey" taste that you may not like.

Pear Variety	Estimated Picking Date
Clapp Favorite	Aug. 20 - Sept. 1
Bennett	Aug. 22 - Sept. 3
Bartlett	Aug. 25 - Sept. 5
Aurora	Aug. 19 - Sept. 9
Rescue	Aug. 25 - Sept.10
Orcas	Aug. 28 - Sept.15
Sirrine	Sept. 4 - Sept. 12
Flemish Beauty	Sept.10 - Sept. 26
Comice	Sept.19 - Oct. 9
Seckel	Sept. 25 - Oct. 9
Highland	Sept. 25 - Oct.12
Anjou	Sept. 25 - Oct.15
Bosc	Sept. 25 - Oct.15
El Dorado	Oct. 1 - Oct. 21



“Violette de Bordeaux”



“Desert King”

fantastic figs

Growing Figs in the New World

by Ray U. Givan, NAFEX Fig Interest Group Coordinator



“Genyss”



“Dan’s Favorite”

What cultivars of figs can we grow in the maritime NW to enjoy ripe, sweet, juicy figs from our own backyards? The most successful figs for western Washington are those that produce a large breba crop, which sets on last year's wood. Main crop fruits, which set on new wood, rarely ripen in the Seattle area. We have been fortunate enough (in a figgy way) to see several long, hot summers in the last few years, resulting in some tasty, sweet, main crop figs.

Figs are easy to grow in warm climates, but produce their best fruit in Mediterranean climates with hot, dry summers and cool, wet winters. Although they are a subtropical species, mature trees are fully cold hardy to 15 or 20° F. People who wish to grow figs outside their normal range must plant them in containers or go to considerable efforts to protect them during the winter.

In the ground, fig plants can quickly reach 15 to 30 feet in height. The canopy can spread equally wide. The root system is typically very shallow without a taproot and can easily spread to three times the diameter of the canopy. Ideally, fig plants should have a well-drained loam with plenty of organic matter, but they will tolerate average to poor soil. Once they are established they are somewhat drought tolerant (probably due to their very extensive and wide-ranging root system).

Figs tolerate soils with pH ranging from 5.5 to 8.0. Growers with acidic soils should apply lime to bring the pH up to the fig's preferred pH of 6.0 to 6.5. Alkaline soils will also support figs, if there are no black alkali deposits present. Fig plants need plenty of sun (8+ hours at least) and heat which helps ripen the fruit. Figs respond very well (better than most fruit trees) to heavy applications of manure and compost. Be sure not to apply fertilizers too late in the growing season since that would spur new growth that cannot harden off before winter. Apply 2 to 3 cups of a balanced (6-6-6 or 8-8-8) fertilizer with micro-nutrients three times a year to mature, in-ground plants. If you grow figs in containers, be sure to use a fertilizer containing them. We recommend a complete slow-release fertilizer like Osmocote. Follow the package directions. Organic growers should apply generous amounts of compost and a high-nitrogen fertilizer like cottonseed, soybean or alfalfa meal. For the best fruit production, water your figs regularly during the growing season unless rainfall is adequate. Take care that the soil is not constantly soggy. When fall arrives, stop watering and allow your plants to harden off. A word of caution: heavy rains and excessive or sporadic watering may

cause the fruit to split. The amount of splitting varies from variety to variety, but a good rule of thumb is that the riper the figs, the more they will split and sour.

Container culture can be successful if you are diligent about watering and feeding the plants. Remember that nutrients leach quickly from containers. The easiest approach is to use a hefty pot (15+ gallons) and let the figs grow 5 to 10 feet tall with regular annual pruning of tops and roots to control the size. In climates where winter temperatures fall under 15-20° F, you will need to bring potted plants into an unheated garage or shed.

Propagating Figs. Figs are easy to propagate as they root very easily. There are several ways to propagate them. The most common method is to root leafless cuttings taken in late winter or early spring. Here's how to do it: 1. Take cuttings which are 3 to 6 inches long and pencil to finger thick. The best cuttings will have some of last year's wood on them. 2. If the weather is still unsettled and likely to frost, store the cuttings in a sealed ziplock in the produce bin in your refrigerator. If the weather is warm and likely to stay warm, pot your cuttings in sand or a good-quality potting mix. 3. Using 4" deep plastic pots, pack a half sheet of newspaper tightly into the bottom of the pot. Put a little mix in the bottom, stand 1 to 4 cuttings upright in each pot and fill the pot with the mix. 4. Water the pots thoroughly and stand them in a very bright, BUT NOT SUNNY place. It should be warm--70+° F. If you can't keep air temperature above 70°, provide bottom heat to bring the soil up to 70° F. Cover the pot with an empty 2 or 3 liter soft drink bottle with the bottom cut out. [Leave the lid on.] 5. Don't water the cuttings again until they are very dry. Test for dryness occasionally by lifting the pot. If the pot is very light, water it by setting it in a pan of water and letting it soak. When you see vigorous growth, it is time to harden off the new plants. Remove the bottle cap

and see how they do. If okay, remove the bottle after a few days. Keep an eye on them and reinstall the bottle if the plants wilt. 6. After a few days, it will be time to pot up the new plants. Don't do this just because you see leaves growing. Sometimes there will be 4 or 5 leaves and few if any roots. Wait until you see vigorous growth. Apply fertilizer.

Overwintering Figs.

Ficus carica is the northernmost species in the *Ficus* genus. Figs that are completely dormant before severely cold weather arrives can tolerate temperatures down to 15 to 20° F with little or no damage. Some varieties are hardier and can tolerate even lower temperatures. If the top is winterkilled, the plant will probably come back from the base or underground parts. If you live in a colder area, it is very important to grow hardy varieties. The hardiest figs include the old favorites Celeste and English Brown Turkey and some new varieties like Alma and Hardy Chicago. Here are some tips on how to protect your figs in the coldest climates: One method is to build a fighouse like A. J. Bullard of Mt. Olive, North Carolina has done to protect some of his varieties which are grafted onto a very hardy in-ground Celeste. He built a winter fighouse by setting pressure-treated posts in the ground around his tree. As winter approaches he attaches plywood to the posts to form walls and a roof. Additional protection is given by several 55-gallon drums stationed in the fighouse and filled with water. The water in the drums stores an enormous amount of heat energy that is released as temperatures fall below freezing. The energy released moderates temperatures in the fighouse. Even at temperatures near 0° F, the fighouse's temperature stays in the mid-twenties. [Do not try this in Minnesota. This will work only where warm and cold spells alternate during the winter and average temperatures are well above 32° F.] For Severe Climates: There are three ways to over winter figs in severe climates: 1. Permanently planted trees can be bent over, weighed down, and buried. 2. Potted plants can be brought indoors or into the greenhouse, and 3. Large potted plants can be depotted and buried.

Disease and Pest Problems. Figs are relatively pest and disease free, but they do have problems. The most serious problem for Southern growers who have light sandy soils is root knot nematodes. This type of infestation is easy to diagnose. Just uncover some roots and inspect them. If you

see tiny galls or swellings on the roots you have root knot nematodes. The best control is to destroy infected plants and not use that site for figs again. Fig trees and fruit are sometimes attacked by a variety of borers, mealy bugs and scale insects. Dried-fruit beetles will sometimes enter figs through the eye of the fruit and cause them to sour. Varieties with open eyes are particularly susceptible to this problem. The best remedy for these problems is sanitation. Prune and burn infested wood and fruit. Don't allow piles of leaves and fruit to accumulate and offer breeding sites for insects. Fig Rust is a fairly serious fungal disease. It attacks young leaves, causing defoliation. It is also easy to recognize from the small yellow-green spots that appear on leaves. The spots will get bigger and turn yellowish brown. The leaf will soon yellow and fall. You can control fig rust by sanitation measures. Extension services also recommend spraying the new leaves with a 4-4-50 Bordeaux spray at three to four week intervals (more often in rainy weather). This will also protect your plants against other leaf and twig blights. Mosaic is a viral disease to which figs are more or less susceptible. The plainest symptom is mottled leaves. Some varieties are dwarfed--leaves and fruit-- by mosaic; others are scarcely effected. Mosaic is incurable, but rarely a reason to discard plants.

Source; for fig trees;

The following nurseries offer medium to large assortments of fig varieties. Listing is not an endorsement. We do not guarantee that you will be satisfied with any of their products or services.

Chestnut Hill Nursery, 15105 NW 94 Avenue, Alachua, FL 32615. 800 669-2067. Free catalog.

Edible Landscaping, P. O. Box 77, Afton, VA 22920. 800 524-4156. URL: www.EAT-IT.com Illustrated catalog free.

Fig Tree Nursery, P. O. Box 124, Gulf Hammock, FL 32639. 352 486-2930. Catalog \$1.00.

Just Fruits, Route 2, Box 4818, Crawfordville, FL 32327. 904 926-5644. Free catalog.

Louisiana Nursery, Route 7, Box 43, Opelousas, LA 70570. 318 948-3696. Catalog \$6.00.

Oregon Exotics, 1065 Messenger Road, Grants Pass, OR 97527. 503 846-7578. Illustrated catalog \$3.00.

Peter Bauwen, Trompwegel 27, B9170 De Klinge,

Belgium. Write for catalog information. (Figs can be legally imported in the U.S. with proper USDA import permits and quarantine.)

Raintree Nursery, 391 Butts Road, Morton, WA 98356. 360 496-6400. Illustrated catalog free.

Read's Nursery, Hales Hall, Loddon, Norfolk, NR14 6QW, Great Britain. 44 01508 548395. Write or call for catalog information. (Figs can be legally imported in the U.S. with proper USDA import permits and quarantine.)

In addition to these commercial and amateur sources, the U. S. Department of Agriculture maintains a series of National Clonal Germplasm Repositories from which cuttings are available. The one at the University of California, Davis holds their fig resources. Their address is: National Clonal Germplasm Repository, USDA-ARS University of California Davis, CA 95616916 752-6504 (voice) or 752-5974 (fax)

Suggested Reading

Bauwen, Peter and Kathelijne Thiers. *Formen in Vijgen. De Klinge: 'De Nieuwe Tuin,'* 1995.

Born, Fred and Ray Givan. *The Fig Booklet.* Self-published. 1996.

Condit, Ira J. "Fig Characteristics Useful in the Identification of Varieties" in *Hilgardia, A Journal of Agricultural Science* Published by the California Agricultural Experiment Station, Vol 14, No 1 (May 1941), 1-69.

Condit, Ira J. *The Fig.* Waltham, MA: Chronica Botanica, 1947.

Condit, Ira J. "Fig Varieties: A Monograph" in *Hilgardia, A Journal of Agricultural Science* Published by the California Agricultural Experiment Station, Vol. 23, No. 11 (Feb 1955), 322-538.

Eisen, Gustav. *The Fig: Its History, Culture and Curing.* Bulletin No 9, U.S. Department of Agriculture, 1902.

Fishman, Ram. *The Handbook for Fruit Explorers.* Chapin, IL: North American Fruit Explorers, Inc., 1986.

Krezdorn, A. H. and G. W. Adriance. *Fig Growing in the South.* Agriculture Handbook No. 196. Agricultural Research Service, U. S. Dept of Agriculture, Jul 1968.

Puls, Earl, Jr. and E. N. O'Rourke. *Figs for Commercial and Home Orchards in Louisiana.* Publication 1529, Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service, Jun 1985.

Starnes, H. N. *The Fig in Georgia.* Bulletin 61, Nov

1903. State College of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts, Experiment, Georgia.

Starnes, H. N. and J. F. Monroe. *The Fig in Georgia - Second Report.* 1907.

Storey, William B., Julius E. Enderrud, Wadie F. Saleeb, and Edward M. Nauer, *The Fig.* Jurupa Mountain Cultural Center, 1977.

Storey, William B. "Fig: *Ficus carica* (Moraceae)" in N. W. Simmonds, Editor, *Evolution of Crop Plants.* New York: Longman, 1976.

U. S. Department of Agriculture. *Growing Figs in the South for Home Use,* Home and Garden Bulletin No. 87.

Zohary, Daniel and Maria Hopf. *Domestication of Plants in the Old World: The Origin and Spread of Cultivated Plants in West Asia, Europe and the Nile Valley.* New York: Oxford University Press, 1988



Fig Pulp Colors. Photo credit: MountainFigs.net

Fig Varieties

Condit's massive monograph (See **Suggested Reading**) identifies 89 caprifig, 129 Smyrna, 21 San Pedro and 481 common fig varieties for a total of 720 varieties. Some of these varieties were never introduced into the United States; others were tried, found wanting and discarded.

Our listing of 50+ varieties includes most of the figs available in the trade **plus** some varieties the authors think worthy of wider use. It divides the varieties into **green and yellow figs** and **dark figs**, arranged alphabetically by their most common name. We use **bold type** for the correct name, the one found in the scientific literature. (If there is no name in bold type, the variety is not covered by Condit or later authors.) The listing follows Condit's names. Condit lists many characteristics in his own identifications, but this article has room only for the major features of the fruit.

Fig leaves vary tremendously and an important characteristic for identifying varieties.

Green and Yellow Varieties

Adriatic - A medium green to greenish-yellow fig shaped like a top with light strawberry pulp and good flavor. Turbinate with small or no neck. Very subject to mosaic. Well adapted in the Northwest, but disappointing in the South. Fairly hardy. Good for drying. Synonyms: Chico, Grosse Verte, Nebian, Strawberry, Verdane.

Alma - A small to medium fig golden-brown, pear-shaped (pyriform) fig with amber pulp. Sweet and delicate flavor. Bred by Texas A & M and released in 1975. Well adapted in the Southeast. highly resistant to fruit rots. Wood is very hardy.

Bianci - A medium to large greenish-yellow fig with white pulp and many seeds. Top-shaped (turbinate) without neck. Sweet and delicate flavor with a nutty texture from the soft seeds. Identical with Blanche except the eye is small and closed. Synonym: Mayes Yellow.

Blanche - An old, reliable variety usually called Lemon in the South. Medium light green fig with white pulp. Same as Bianci except for the open eye (which can lead to souring). Well-adapted in the South. Fairly hardy. Synonyms: Lemon, Marseilles, White Russian, etc.

Brunswick - A medium to large fig with bronzy-yellow skin and rich flavor. Obliqueturbinate. Well-adapted in the Southwest and drier areas of the South. The fruit is ruined by excessive rain. Fairly hardy. Synonyms: Dalmatian, Madonna, Magnolia.

Calimyrna - The California commercial fig. Large yellow fig with amber pulp and a large open eye. Oblate-spherical. Sweet, very rich nutty flavor. Numerous seeds. Needs pollination. Not practical for Southern growers. Synonyms: Erbeyli, Lop Injir, Sari Lop.

Conadria - A medium to large yellow-green fig with light

strawberry pulp and rich flavor, bred by Ira Condit and released in 1957. Pyriform. Well adapted in California and the Southeast. Fairly hardy. Synonyms: Adriatic Hybrid, Verdane Hybrid.

Excel - A medium-sized yellow fig with amber pulp, also bred by Ira Condit and released in 1975. Oblate to spherical. Well-adapted in California. Early trials in the Southeast were very promising. Seems to be very hardy. Superb flavor. Synonyms: Kadota Hybrid.

Galbun - A large, light green to pale yellow fig with a translucent pulp tinged with pink. Good flavor. Seems moderately hardy. Synonyms: Jewel, Malcolm's Super Giant.

Gillette - A large, edible caprifig with fair flavor. Pyriform with distinct neck. Adapted in northern California and the Northwest. Not so good in the South. Synonyms: **Croisic**, Cordelia, Pingo de Mel.

Green Ischia - A small, grass green fig with dark strawberry pulp. Oblate to spherical. Small, fairly well closed eye. Good quality, but not as good as Brown Turkey. Matures late. Fairly hardy. Synonyms: Coeur, Verdane, **Verte**.

Ischia - A small to medium yellow fig with fair flavor. Oblate to spherical with or without short neck. Well-adapted in coastal California. Its quality in the South is poor. Synonyms: Brockett Hall, Singleton, White Ischia

Jurupa - Very large, green fig with pink pulp and a medium, but closed eye. Pyriform. A Condit hybrid selected by Julius Enderud. Good flavor. Under trial in the South.

Kadota - Greenish-white fig, small to medium sized. Pyriform. Vigorous. Delicious fresh or dried. It is a rich, sweet, all purpose fig and the most common canned fig. Well adapted in the Southwest and drier areas of the South. Fairly hardy. Synonyms: **Dottato**, etc.

King - A medium greenish-yellow fig with strawberry pulp. Pyriform to oblique. It ripens a large breba crop between late June and August. A San Pedro type, it sometimes sets main crop figs without pollination. Sweet and rich. Well-adapted in the Northwest and cooler areas of the South. Fairly hardy. Synonyms: Desert King, White King.

Lattarula - A medium to large yellowish-green fig widely grown in the Northwest. It is said to be very sweet. Condit does not identify it as a distinct variety and considers it a synonym for Blanche, but its leaves are quite different. Synonyms: Italian Honey Fig

LSU Gold - A large yellow fig blushed with red. Strawberry pulp. A. J. Bullard says its flavor is outstanding. Has a small eye that leaks honeydew. Deserves wider trials.

Mary Lane - A medium yellow fig said to have originated in California. The fruit is very juicy and nearly seedless. Well-adapted in all fig areas. Synonyms: Jelly, Seedless.

Panachée - A chimera which produces green fruit with yellow stripes and strawberry pulp. Pyriform with prominent neck. Mealy texture. Leaf: **not variegated**. Aficionados in California say it can produce excellent, fresh fruit. In the South its flavor is mediocre. Synonyms: Panache, Tiger, Variegato.

Tena - A medium to large greenish-yellow fig with light strawberry pulp, bred by Ira Condit and released in 1975. Oblate with small or no neck. Widely adapted, but likes hot, dry weather. Somewhat hardy. Very sweet, but not rich.

Dark Varieties

Beall - A medium to large, purplish-black fig with amber pulp. Brebas are pyriform with prominent neck; main crop is oblate to pyriform with a short, thick neck. Very good flavor. Well-adapted in California and hardy in the South.

Black Jack - A large to very large purple brown fig with amber pulp streaked with strawberry. Oblate, flattened. Good flavor. Fairly hardy. Black Jack is an unidentified variety. Some think it is identical with California Brown Turkey. Synonym: Black Spanish.

Bordeaux - Large almost black fruit with a very deep red pulp and a distinctive, but agreeable acid flavor. Brebas are pyriform with a thick, tapering neck; main crop figs are variable often without neck. Medium eye. Excellent fresh or dried. Well-adapted in the South and Southwest. Fairly hardy. Synonyms: Beer's Black, Negronne, Violette de Bordeaux, etc.

Brown Turkey - Small to medium light brown to violet fruit with strawberry pulp. Turbinate to oblique, mostly without neck. Small eye which has a reddish color from very early stage (unlike Celeste). Cold hardy. It fruits on new growth if winter killed. Often bears two crops a year. Very sweet, but not rich. Synonyms: Eastern Brown Turkey, English Brown Turkey, Everbearing, Texas Everbearing.

California Brown Turkey - A large purplish-brown fig with good flavor. Brebas are oblique-pyriform, sometimes elongated; main crop figs are oblique-pyriform with variable neck. Well-adapted in California. Not hardy enough for the South. Synonyms: Black Jack(?), Black Spanish, San Pedro, **San Piero**, Thompson's Improved Brown Turkey.

Celeste - Small to medium fig with light brown to violet skin and strawberry pulp. Pyriform with tapering neck. Small, closed eye. The eye remains green until the fig is almost ripe (unlike **Brown Turkey**). Very cold hardy. Excellent fig -- arguably the finest Southern fig, but usually disappointing in California and the Southwest. Synonyms: Celestial, Conant, Sugar Fig, **Malta**, Tennessee Mountain Fig.

Early Violet - A small to very small chocolate brown fig with amber to pink pulp. Turbinate to oblate-spherical. No brebas, but the main crop is early. Fair to good quality. Once very popular in the South. Susceptible to mosaic which dwarfs fruit and leaves.

Flanders - A greenish-yellow, medium fig with violet stripes and amber pulp, bred and released by Ira Condit in 1975. Pyriform with a long slender neck. Fine flavor. Plants are vigorous, but not particularly hardy. Good on the West Coast. Synonym: Verdone Hybrid.

Hardy Chicago - Small to medium fruit with light brown to

violet skin and strawberry pink pulp. Small eye. Pyriform with long slender neck. Excellent flavor and very hardy. Resembles Brown Turkey.

Hunt - A small brown fig with amber pulp tinged with strawberry, bred by E. W. Hunt of Eatonton, Georgia in the 1920s. Pyriform with a short distinct neck. Distinctive feature is its long, slender stems to 3/4" long stems that help it shed rain. Superb flavor, sweet and rich. Not a heavy bearer, but well-adapted in the rainy areas of the South.

Ischia Black - A small purplish-black fig with strawberry pulp. Turbinate. Fairly sweet and rich flavor. Well-adapted in coastal California, but not very productive in the South. Not particularly hardy. Has been replaced by Celeste.

LSU Purple - A small to medium purple fig with variable shape and flavor introduced by Louisiana State University in 1991. Its breeder, E. N. O'Rourke, says the plant is nematode resistant. Well adapted to the Deep South. Fairly tender.

Mission - A large black fig with light strawberry pulp. Brebas are pyriform with a prominent thick neck; main crop figs are smaller and more variable, pyriform. Well adapted in California. Disappointing in the South since it is not very hardy. Often infected by mosaic that mottles the leaves, but does not seem to effect the crop. Synonyms: **Franciscana**, Black Mission.

Nero - A large purplish-black fig with light pink pulp. Turbinate-pyriform with a flattened apex. Eye medium, open. Flavor is fairly sweet and rich. Very good to excellent flavor. Well-adapted in the Southwest and South. Synonyms: **Barnisotte**, Brogiotto Nero.

Neveralla - A medium bronze to brown fig with white to amber pulp. Brebas are pyriform with prominent neck; main crop figs are pyriform to turbinate with a thick neck. Variable stalks. Fair flavor. Resembles Osborn Prolific. Synonyms: **Archipel**, Osborn, Osborne's Prolific.

Osborn Prolific - A medium bronze to brown fig with amber to light strawberry pulp. Main crop figs are pyriform with variable necks. Long slender stalks (to 1" long). Sweet and rich flavor. Well-adapted in all fig growing areas. Hardy. Very productive. Synonyms: Archipel, Hardy Prolific, Neveralla, Osborne, Rust. Pasquale - A small purple fig with strawberry pulp distinguished by its late ripening--often in December or January. Oblate-spherical to pyriform with a short thick neck. Not hardy. Fruit is sweet and rich when not damaged by frost. Synonyms: Natalino, **Vernino**.

Petite Negri - A medium to large, black fig introduced by Mike McConkey of Edible Landscaping. Good flavor. Its leaves resemble those of **Alma** and it may be a sport of **Alma**.

Royal Vineyard - A medium bronze to brown fig with light strawberry pulp. Brebas are pyriform with a prominent thick and curving neck. A San Pedro type. Brebas only! Not worth growing in the South due to late frosts which destroy the fruit most years. A vigorous plant, it might deserve a trial in the North and West. Synonym: **Drap d'Or**



from the Fruitful Kitchen:

Early Pear Salad with Hazelnuts & Aged Cheddar

Ingredients

½ cup coarsely chopped hazelnuts
3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
1 tablespoon honey
Sea salt and freshly ground pepper
2 teaspoons rice vinegar
6 ounces aged Cheddar, preferably Trader Joe's Unexpected Cheddar
1 ½ pounds ripe Bartlett or other early pears

Combine nuts and oil in a small skillet; cook, stirring often, over medium low heat, until golden brown.

Remove from heat and add honey, salt and pepper. Add 1 teaspoon vinegar, then taste and adjust by adding more of everything.

Thinly slice the cheese. Cut pears into ¼ inch wedges and place on large plate. Sprinkle with salt and drizzle with remaining vinegar. Scatter cheese over, then spoon dressing onto all. Let sit for at least 20 minutes for best flavor.

Contributed by Tracey Bernal

This recipe and its variations are adapted from a feature in the March 2019 issue of Bon Appetit magazine.

A few variations to consider for your fruit as it becomes ready to harvest:

Persimmon, Gorgonzola, and Pecan
D'Anjou Pear, Parmesan, Hazelnut
Watermelon, Feta, Walnut

STFS: Who Are We and What We Do

Western Cascade Fruit Society, our parent organization, is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. The WCFS was founded in 1980 and is made up of chapters throughout Western Washington whose members are aspiring hobby orchardists and backyard fruit growers. Our primary objective is to bring together new and experienced fruit growers who will promote the science, cultivation and pleasure of growing fruit bearing trees, vines and plants in the home landscape. Local chapters disseminate information through education, fruit shows, orchard tours, meetings, workshops, and publications.

WCFS is the parent organization to nine affiliated chapters. WCFS publishes a quarterly BeeLine newsletter to inform members of events, tours, articles, and reports. Members receive automatic membership in WCFS after joining an affiliated Chapter. WCFS provides other member services, including a member forum, a chapter-wide event calendar, and a home for chapter sites. These can be found at www.wcfs.org.

Seattle Tree Fruit Society (STFS) is a chapter of WCFS, one of nine chapters in Western Washington. STFS brings together amateur growers – beginners to experts – from the Greater Seattle area who share an interest in growing fruit and nut trees, berries, kiwis, grapes, and other fruit. We offer information on adapted varieties, up-to-the-minute growing techniques, and share our own experiences growing fruit.

We meet each month from September to May, usually on a Saturday morning. Programs explore topics tailored to Western Washington growers, such as grafting, pruning, pest control, recommended varieties, nurseries, suppliers, home wine and cider making, and more.

STFS members receive both The Urban Scion Post, our monthly newsletter, and The BeeLine, an on-line quarterly from Western Cascade Fruit Society. Both feature a wide variety of useful articles about fruit, and announce upcoming events. Find us on [Facebook](#) and on our website www.seattletreefruitsociety.com.

The function of our STFS **membership** is to **be** the Seattle Tree Fruit Society. This is your organization. Please let us know what is most important to you. STFS can always do more! If there is a way that any of our members feel that STFS can be better, let us know. How can the board of directors be of further help to you as members? Please let board members know. And, some extent, the question is what can you, as a part of our organization, do to make STFS better, be it for your community, your local chapter, or for WCFS, our parent organization. Get involved. Remember, STFS is **you**.

SEATTLE TREE FRUIT SOCIETY

Email: seattletreefruitsociety@gmail.com

STFS OFFICERS:

PRESIDENT: Mike Ewanciw (2021)
(206) 683-9665 seattletreefruitsociety@gmail.com

VICE-PRES. Tracey Bernal (2021)
(206) 913-3778

SECRETARY Sue Williams (2021)

TREASURER Trent Elwing (2021)
(206) 517-3118

MEMBERSHIP: Trent Elwing (206) 517-3118
HOSPITALITY: Judy Scheinuk (206) 363-5038
TECHNOLOGY: Mark Lee (206) 434-1693

STFS DIRECTORS:

#1 - Rick Shultz (2020) (206) 327-4730
#2 - Laure Jansen (2019) (206) 743-2348
#3 - Linda Sartnurak (2021) (425) 271-6264
#4 - Vacant
#5 - Gudrun Utz (2021) (206) 491-2133
#6 - Trent Elwing (2021) (206) 517-3118
#7 - Vacant (2019)

USP EDITORS:

Laure Jansen seattleorchardist@gmail.com
Tracey Bernal tmjbernal0216@gmail.com

STANDING COMMITTEES & CHAIRS

Orchard Committee - please volunteer
Events Committee - please volunteer
Programs Committee - please volunteer