

Fact Sheet

Kiwi Fruit & Figs

Kiwi Fruit

Actinidia chinensis, Kiwi fruit or Chinese Gooseberries are actually native to China though their export potential was first recognised by New Zealand nurserymen who renamed the fruit and in turn, species of the fruit are named after New Zealand growers.

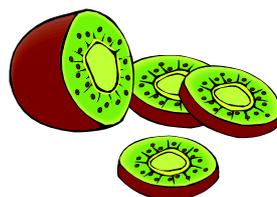
They will grow best if planted into well drained slightly acid soil (pH 6.5) in a sunny position protected from winds and late frosts which may crack the fruit. Plant graft several inches above ground level approximately 4-5 metres apart with about 1kg of Blood & Bone per female plant. Fruit will only set on the female plants however they need a male partner for cross fertilisation purposes, one male will pollinate 6-8 female plants.

Kiwis are shallow rooted plants hence need to be mulched heavily and fed copious amounts of food (compost, Blood & Bone with added Sulphate of Potash) and plenty of water for they have a large leaf area so will grow quickly. As they are vigorous, heavy vines strong trellis or support will be necessary.

They may commence cropping at 3 years of age, good yields at 5 years and yields of up to 80kg per vine at 9 years. Fruit should be thinned to produce larger fruit. Prune in winter, maintaining main structural branches and cutting back side branches to a few buds. Male vines can be cut back more severely as they are more vigorous.

The fruit is the shape and size of a plum, with brown hairy skin, green flesh and black seeds. Pick the largest fruit, leave rest on vine for up to several weeks without reducing quality, if picked too early the fruit, will shrivel. Picked when hard they will slowly soften in a warm room.

Kiwi Fruit is used for fresh eating, desserts or as a meat tenderiser.



The 2 main Kiwi Fruit varieties are:

Hayward -

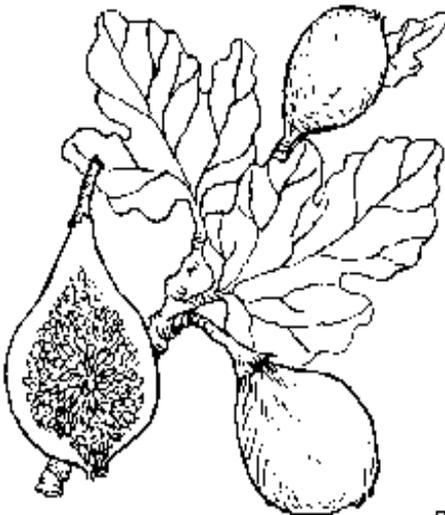
Standard commercial variety, keeps well, matures April/May.

Bruno -

Large fruit, heavy cropper, poor keeper, Matures March/April.



The main **pest** problems are *caterpillars* - control with Dipel or Carbaryl. The main **disease** problem is *grey mould* which can rot blossom and fruit, spray with Mancozeb. *Phytophthora fungus* can cause roots to rot in poorly drained soils.



Figs

Figs are fast growing long lived trees that make excellent specimens, shade trees or hedging plants. While young they may need some frost protection but once established are resistant to all but the severest conditions.

Figs prefer a warm dry summer and autumn, plant in a sunny sheltered well drained position rich in lime, heavy soils are okay provided they are well drained. If planting more than one tree plant about 6-8 metres apart, aim for an open vase shape and mulch as they have shallow roots. They require a fairly minimal level of care being so hardy, too much fertiliser results in leaf rather than fruit growth.

The most productive fig trees can often be found in neglected gardens.

Figs crop twice a year, occasionally fruit hangs on over winter, it will ripen over a period of time so pick over a few days as it softens and commences wilting at the neck. They grow extremely well from cuttings. Figs do not require pollination except Smyrna variety which needs both another variety and intervention from the fig wasp to fruit. Flowers are actually carried inside the fruit.

Fruit is very perishable hence transportation may be difficult. Gloves should be worn as sap can irritate the skin. Figs are very popular either eaten fresh or dried.

Main varieties of Figs are:

Black Genoa -

Medium size red brown skin, red pulp. Good flavour. Normally produces 2 crops per year, maturing early Summer & then late Autumn. Good for eating, drying and jam. Self fertile.

Brown Turkey -

Large, rich flavoured fruit. Brown skin, pink flesh. Late season. Will produce 2 crops per year, early Summer & late Autumn. Vigorous tree. Good for eating, drying & jam. Self fertile.

The main pest problems for Figs are birds, so netting may be considered. Occasionally leaf spot and rust can occur, Mancozeb will prove effective.

FACT: The milky juice of a freshly broken fig stalk has been found to be successful in removing warts.



FACT: Dried figs have been found among the ruins of Pompeii, and in fact, formed a large portion of the diet of slaves and agricultural workers.