PLANT FACT SHEET

Ficus sur Forssk.

GENUS *Ficus* **FAMILY** Moraceae

COMMON NAMES Cape fig, Broom cluster fig, Brown cluster fig

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Fruit, Leaves, Roots, Bark, Vegetable

The ripe figs are edible but often infected with insects. They can be eaten raw. The seeds are removed. The fruit are eaten in porridge. They can be used for jam or preserves. They can be dried.
The young leaves are cooked and eaten.
The roots above the ground are eaten when young.
The bark is chewed with cola nuts to reduce thirst.

DESCRIPTION

A fig. This tree varies in form. It can be a small tree up to 6 m tall in dry places or a large spreading tree up to 12-24 m tall in forest. It normally loses its leaves for a short period. The bark is smooth and brownish grey. It has a thick trunk and shallow spreading roots. The leaves are alternate and leathery. They are oval with a pointed tip. The leaves are 10 cm long by 3 cm wide. They can be 23 cm long by 13 cm wide. They are red when young becoming green when mature. They are smooth and sometimes slightly hairy underneath. The leaf stalks are long and with a furrow on the upper surface. Twigs and leaves have milky juice. There are only a few small male flower near the opening of the fig and many female flowers. The fig is pollinated by a small wasp. The figs are roughly round and about 2-4 cm across. They have a prominent opening at the end. They are reddish-yellow when ripe. They hang from the trunk and old main branches. The pulp is sweet. Many figs form one long bunch.

HABITAT

A tropical plant. It occurs from sea level to 1600 m altitude. It can be up to 2,100 m. It occurs in areas where the rainfall is 700-1200 mm. It grows in the Sahel. It grows in wet soils. It usually grows near streams. It cannot tolerate cold. It can be grown in sun but is best in shade. It can grow in arid places. It grows in Miombo woodland in Africa. It suits hardiness zones 10-12.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants normally grow naturally from seed. The seeds are very fine. They can be grown from cuttings. Stem cuttings can be treated with rooting hormone. It can be cut back and will re-grow.
The pollinator wasps are Ceratosolen capensis, Ceratosolen flabellatus and Ceratosolen silvestrianus.

Harvesting and Seed Production

Trees are quick growing. Fruit are usually collected at the end of the rainy season. They are harvested by climbing the trees. A fruit weighs about 12 g.

NOTES

There are about 800-1000 Ficus species. They are mostly in the tropics. There are 120 Ficus species in tropical America.

PICTURES



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)

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French, B.R. & Maynard, A.R. Food Plants International Database. Food Plants International

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