PLANT FACT SHEET

Ficus thonningii Blume

GENUS *Ficus* **FAMILY** Moraceae

COMMON NAMES Common wild fig, Bark-cloth fig, Burke's fig, Strangler fig

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Fruit, Leaves, Gum

The ripe fig fruit are eaten raw. They are also used for jams and jellies and for alcoholic drinks.
The leaves are eaten raw in salads.

DESCRIPTION

A fig. It is a tree which can lose its leaves during the dry season of the year. It is often a strangler fig on oil palm. It grows up to 12-25 m high. It can grow in soil or attached to other plants. It can be a climber. It can have buttresses or have several stems. The crown is dark and rounded and spreading. The bark is smooth and grey. The leafy twigs are 2-8 mm thick. The leaves are arranged in spirals. The leaves vary. They are often oval. The leaves are 3-12 cm long by 2-6 cm wide. There are 7-12 pairs of side veins. The young leaves are pale and hairy underneath. The fig fruit are about 1 cm across. The fruit often occur in pairs in the axils of the leaves. They become purple-red when ripe.

HABITAT

A tropical plant. It grows in wet and dry upland forest. It also grows in open grassland, woodland and swamp forest and along rivers. It can be on the edges of mangroves. It grows in the Sahel. It grows in areas with a 700-1800 mm rainfall. It grows in savannah forest often on stony hills in West Africa. It grows between 1,000-2,500 m altitude. It is drought tolerant. It can grow in arid places. It is sensitive to cold. It can tolerate drought. It occurs in woodland and often on termite mounds. It suits hardiness zones 7-9.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

It can be grown from seed or from cuttings. The fruit are dried and the seeds removed. As well the fruit can be soaked in cold water for a day then turned inside out to remove the seeds. Cuttings 15 cm long by 1 cm wide are suitable. It can also be grown from large branches 2-3 m long by 10 cm wide.

Harvesting and Seed Production

It is fast growing. Often fruit are infested with insects.

NOTES

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

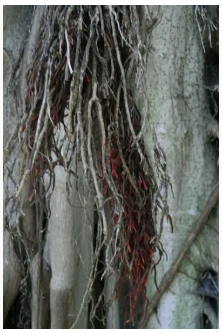
PICTURES



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