

# *Ficus lyrata* Fiddleleaf Fig<sup>1</sup>

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## INTRODUCTION

A 40 to 50-foot-tall, evergreen tree of upright-spreading, irregular growth, Fiddleleaf Fig produces 8 to 15-inch-long and 10-inch-wide, dull green, thick, fiddle-shaped leaves which are quite attractive (Fig. 1). The trunk can grow to several feet thick. Most trees in the landscape are 15 to 25 feet tall. Larger ones sometimes break apart in strong winds due to tight branch crotches and embedded bark. Corrective pruning early in the life of the tree can help prevent this from occurring. Plant them in a place protected from the wind, such as a courtyard to increase longevity in the landscape.

## GENERAL INFORMATION

**Scientific name:** *Ficus lyrata*

**Pronunciation:** FYE-kuss lye-RAY-tuh

**Common name(s):** Fiddleleaf Fig

**Family:** *Moraceae*

**USDA hardiness zones:** 10B through 11 (Fig. 2)

**Origin:** not native to North America

**Uses:** container or above-ground planter; espalier; suitable for growing indoors; recommended for buffer strips around parking lots or for median strip plantings in the highway; near a deck or patio; shade tree; specimen; residential street tree; no proven urban tolerance

**Availability:** generally available in many areas within its hardiness range

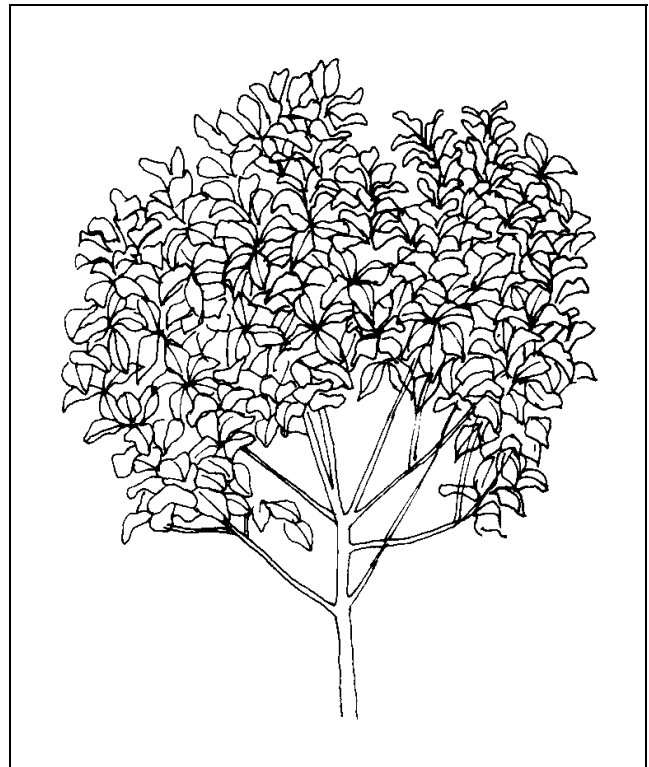


Figure 1. Young Fiddleleaf Fig.

## DESCRIPTION

**Height:** 25 to 40 feet

**Spread:** 25 to 35 feet

**Crown uniformity:** irregular outline or silhouette

**Crown shape:** round; spreading; vase shape

**Crown density:** moderate

**Growth rate:** medium

**Texture:** coarse

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Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

### Foliage

**Leaf arrangement:** alternate (Fig. 3)

**Leaf type:** simple

**Leaf margin:** entire; undulate

**Leaf shape:** obovate

**Leaf venation:** banchidodrome; pinnate

**Leaf type and persistence:** broadleaf evergreen; evergreen

**Leaf blade length:** 8 to 12 inches; 4 to 8 inches

**Leaf color:** green

**Fall color:** no fall color change

**Fall characteristic:** not showy

### Flower

**Flower characteristics:** inconspicuous and not showy

### Fruit

**Fruit shape:** round

**Fruit length:** < .5 inch

**Fruit covering:** fleshy

**Fruit color:** green

**Fruit characteristics:** does not attract wildlife; inconspicuous and not showy; fruit, twigs, or foliage cause significant litter

### Trunk and Branches

**Trunk/bark/branches:** droop as the tree grows, and will require pruning for vehicular or pedestrian clearance beneath the canopy; not particularly showy; should be grown with a single leader; no thorns

**Pruning requirement:** requires pruning to develop strong structure

**Breakage:** resistant

**Current year twig color:** brown

**Current year twig thickness:** thick

### Culture

**Light requirement:** tree grows in part shade/part sun; tree grows in full sun

**Soil tolerances:** clay; loam; sand; acidic; occasionally wet; alkaline; well-drained

**Drought tolerance:** high

**Aerosol salt tolerance:** moderate

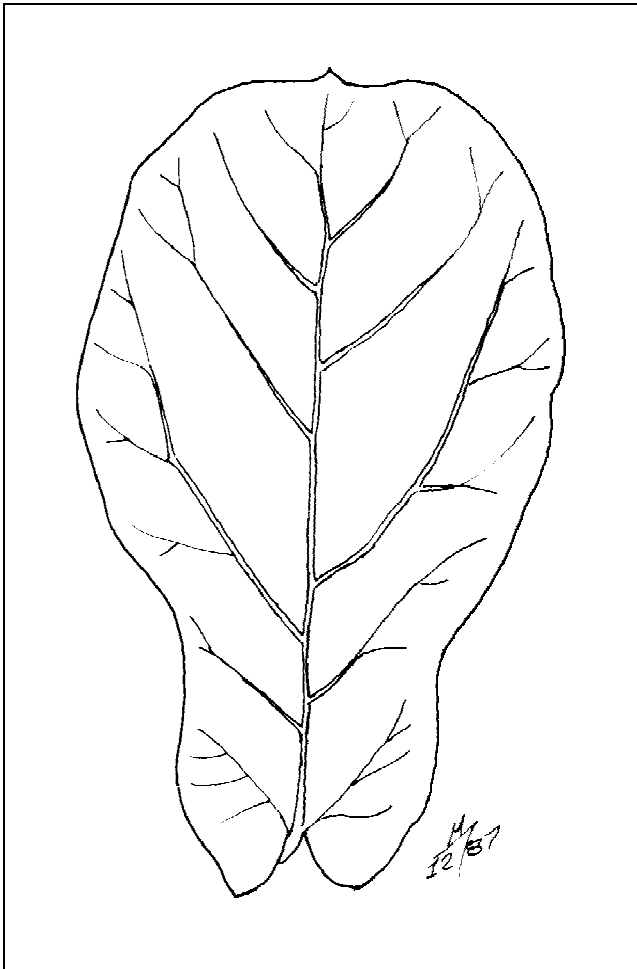


Figure 3. Foliage of Fiddleleaf Fig.

### Other

**Roots:** surface roots are usually not a problem

**Winter interest:** no special winter interest

**Outstanding tree:** not particularly outstanding

**Invasive potential:** little, if any, potential at this time

**Pest resistance:** long-term health usually not affected by pests

### USE AND MANAGEMENT

Fiddleleaf Fig can be used in containers when young or can be planted to make a striking specimen tree. They create quite an accent by a patio or in shrub bed because of the coarse leaf texture. Due to their large size, the leaves can be a nuisance to some people when they fall but there are never too many of them.

Fiddleleaf Fig will grow moderately fast in full sun or partial shade on any well-drained soil and should receive regular watering. Be sure to cut roots circling the container before planting since these can

cause the tree to become unstable as it grows older. There are some aerial roots produced from the branches but not as many as on some other *Ficus*, such as *Ficus benjamina*.

Propagation is by layering and cuttings.

### Pests and Diseases

No pests or diseases are of major concern but occasionally scales are a problem.