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# How to Care for Fiddle Leaf Figs



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## Growing Fiddle Leaf Fig Plants: Lighting, Watering, Repotting, Propagation, and Pests

FREE GUIDE!



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One of the most popular houseplants of recent years, the fiddle leaf fig brings beautiful green leaves and impressive height to any space. Learn how to plant, grow, and care for fiddle leaf figs!

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## About Fiddle Leaf Figs

Fiddle leaf figs have a reputation for being a bit finicky. Looking at it another way, they really just know what they want and are kind enough to communicate it to you! If they don't get the right care, they'll let you know by dropping their leaves.

Deep green, leathery foliage that is, well, fid-

vides a tropical feel that gets featured in many interior design photo shoots.



Credit: Rawpixel/Shutterstock

Their botanical name is *Ficus lyrata*. While they share the same genus as the delicious fruit-bearing common fig, *Ficus carica*, fiddle leaf figs won't fruit when grown indoors. They may bear fruit when grown as an outdoor plant, but **it is not edible**.

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grow to sizes of more than 30 feet tall. When grown as a houseplant, it is limited by the size of its container and will typically top out at about 6 to 10 feet. It still makes for a large statement piece. A 6-foot-tall fiddle leaf fig gets noticed!



One of the largest houseplants, Fiddle Leaf Figs add height to any space. Credit: Photomaven/Shutterstock.

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## PLANTING

### How to Plant Fiddle Leaf Figs

When you bring your fiddle leaf fig home, it may need to be repotted. Choose a new container one size-up, and make sure the

eral-purpose potting mix with some perlite is fine.

After you remove the plant from its original container, inspect the roots. Any circling or girdling roots should be cut.

Follow the same process if you are repotting your existing *F. lyrata*. They should be given a new pot and fresh soil every 2 to 3 years unless they outgrow their home before then.

## GROWING

Fiddle leaf figs don't have to be challenging to care for. Follow these care tips for the best results.

- Light intensity is critical when trying to keep your fiddle leaf fig happy. They prefer bright, indirect light or a bit of gentle morning sun. They typically don't like being directly in the window but prefer a location a few feet back. Too little light will result in slow growth.
- Issues with proper watering—whether over or under—are common and most likely to cause the dreaded leaf drop temper tantrum. Don't worry. Your fiddle leaf fig

ways. While they like moist soil, like many plants, they detest being in soggy conditions. Check before watering by inserting your finger into the potting mix. Water when the top two inches of soil feels dry.

Resist the urge to water on a schedule without checking the moisture first. When it is time to water, give it a thorough drink.

- Drainage is important. Besides well-draining soil and a pot with holes in the bottom, check the drain pan or saucer under the plant. It's easy to water your plant and forget that the excess water has accumulated in the tray. If that happens, the plant is still sitting in water. Empty it out after you're done watering.
- Humidity and fiddle leaf figs go hand in hand. They are found in a warm, humid climate in the wild. Group other humidity-loving plants together to take advantage of the humidity boost caused by transpiration. Pebble trays, or a small room humidifier are other ways to raise the relative humidity in the room for your plants. Visit this page from the University of Nebraska Extension for more information on [how to raise humidity for your houseplants](#).



*Cutting the branches of the Fiddle Leaf Fig to be propagated. Credit: P. Praerin/Shutterstock*

## Propagating

Fiddle leaf figs can be propagated with stem cuttings you remove when pruning. Rooting cuttings in water is the most common method, although they can also be rooted in potting medium.

- Cuttings of fiddle leaf fig will be large, so you'll need pruning shears. Pick an actively growing branch or stem. If it has new green growth, follow the stem until it changes from green to brown and woody. Make the cut just below a node.
- You may need to remove some leaves from your cutting. Grab the leaf at the base and pop it off with a twist.
- You'll need a tall container with a heavy bottom to hold the cutting upright. Fill it with clean, room temperature water and add the cutting. The node should be un-

- Place the container in a warm spot with bright indirect light.
- Change the water weekly, more often, if you notice it is cloudy.

In 6-8 weeks, white roots will appear.

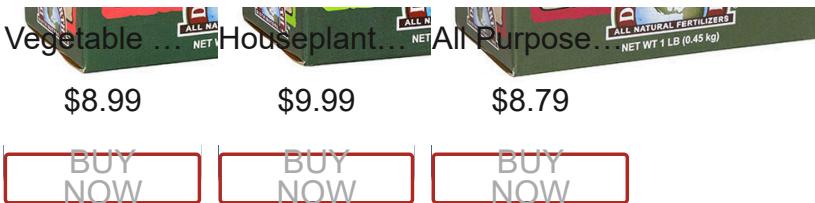
When the roots are an inch long, transplant the new fiddle leaf fig. Keep the mix moist while the plant is becoming established.

## Types

- '**Bambino**' is a dwarf variety and stays a more manageable 2-3 feet tall, perfect for small apartments or bathrooms.
- '**Compacta**' reaches 5 feet tall and has smaller leaves that grow in bunches. Impressive size without taking over the room.
- '**Variegata**' is harder to find. Beautiful green and cream leaves make a striking display.

## GARDENING PRODUCTS





## PESTS/DISEASES

Fiddle leaf figs are susceptible to many common houseplant pests. Additionally, check out this page from Clemson Cooperative Extension for more information about  diseases that affect plants in the Ficus genus.

- **Bacterial leaf spots**
- [Scale insects](#)
- [Spider mites](#)
- [Mealybugs](#)

## WIT AND WISDOM

- When pruned, fiddle leaf figs will exude a white, milky sap that can cause skin irritation or drip on your carpet. Wipe it up with a paper towel or damp cloth.
- Brown margins on leaves can be carefully trimmed off with sterile scissors, following the leaf edge.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

### Andy Wilcox



Andy Wilcox is a flower farmer and master gardener with a passion for soil health, small producers, forestry, and horticulture. [Read More from Andy Wilcox](#)

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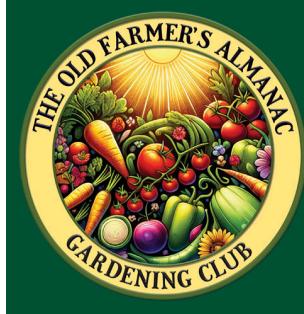
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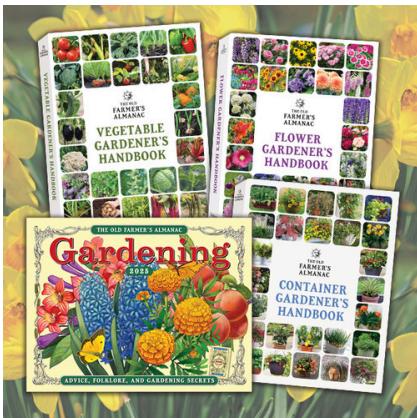
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