Council Tree, *Lofty Fig*

GENERAL

Origin	:	sub-tropical, tropical
Vigour	:	fast growing
Humidity	:	semi-arid, semi-humid, very humid
Propagation	:	cuttings, aerial layering, sowing and pricking out
Maintenance	:	moderate

CONDITIONS

Urban climate	:	resistant
Dessication	:	vulnerable
Stagnant water	:	vulnerable
Irrigation	:	medium
Salinity/ppm	:	high (5000 ppm)
Hardiness	:	0°C

SHAPE

Type	:	tree
Height	:	12 m-20 m
Spread	:	12 m-20 m
Foliage	:	evergreen

FLOWER

Colour	:	green
Size	:	0.5 cm
Period	:	March - April

FRUIT

Type of fruit	:	drupe(fleshy/juicy)
Fruit size	:	1.5 cm - 2 cm
Toxicity	:	inedible, fruit

The Council Tree, also known as Lofty Fig, is a large-leaved, fast-growing tree with its origins in India. In Arriyadh, it has become a very common and successful tree, having been planted in major projects in the city, mostly on roadsides and squares. Tall, up to 20 metres in height, it has a wide, spreading crown and, in time, develops drooping, aerial roots. Trees sometimes develop multiple trunks. Its simple, glabrous and elliptical leaves measure up to 25 cm in length and have pronounced white veins, making it distinguishable from other large-leaved Ficus trees. The fruits are similar to those of the edible fig, but more rounded in shape, and are orange-coloured when ripe. The bark is typically a light silver grey and is an attractive contrast to the leaves in the shade. F. altissima requires deep fertile soils, but grows well in sandy soil and tolerates both salinity and drought; however, regular irrigation is a necessity. Propagation is by softwood cuttings, air-layering on branches or by seed. It is not particularly prone to pests, but can appear cholorotic at times. F. altissima lends a lush, tropical appearance to a planting scheme, but unfortunately is not frost-tolerant. Providing excellent shade from Arriyadh's relentless sun, it tends to shade out plants growing beneath. It is a magnificent tree as a specimen in a park, and is also suitable for large gardens. Only moderate maintenance is required.