

THE

# NEW AMERICAN ORCHARDIST;

AN ACCOUNT OF

THE MOST VALUABLE VARIETIES

OF

## FRUIT,

OF ALL CLIMATES,

ADAPTED TO CULTIVATION IN THE UNITED STATES;

WITH THEIR

HISTORY, MODES OF CULTURE, MANAGEMENT, USES, &c.

### WITH AN APPENDIX,

ON

### VEGETABLES,

ORNAMENTAL TREES, SHRUBS, AND FLOWERS,

THE AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES OF AMERICA,  
AND ON SILK, &c.

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**WITH A SUPPLEMENT.**

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# SOUTHERN FRUITS.

## CLASS I.

FRUITS WHICH MAY BE CULTIVATED IN THE SOUTH-WESTERN AND SOUTHERN STATES, TO THE LAT. OF 25°.

Most of these, however, may flourish in the Middle States, and a small portion may succeed in the North-western and Eastern States, to the latitude of 43°, and in Oregon.

FIG. (*Ficus carica*.)

The fig tree is a native of Asia; a deciduous tree in the temperate climates, but an evergreen within the tropics. In a warm climate, it grows to a very large size. The branches are smooth, of a dark ashen color; the leaves cordate, ovate, three or five-lobed, thick; the fruit grows on the wood of the former year in the axils of the leaves; its form is turbinate; it contains a pulp of a sweet and delicious flavor. The fig forms an important article of culture in Barbary, Greece, Italy, Spain, and the south of France, for drying, and on the coasts of the Mediterranean and its isles. In these countries, it grows to a large size. It is also cultivated pretty extensively near Paris, for the supply of its markets. Here they are kept low, that they may be with the greater ease protected in winter. They are planted on the south sides of walls, buildings, and the southern declivities of hills. Phillips informs us that there is an orchard of a hundred standard fig trees near Worthing, in Sussex, England; its extent is three quarters of an acre. The trees are of the size of large apple trees, and ripen their fruit as well as in any part of Spain. They are annually productive, and very profitable, ripening in August, September, and October.

**Uses.** The fig is a wholesome and delicious article of the dessert; and in those countries where it is extensively cultivated, it is not only eaten in a green or dried state, but fried or stewed, and in various ways, with or without bread

or meat, as food. Figs are prepared by dipping them in scalding ley, made of the ashes of the fig tree, and then dried in the sun. And according to Dambourney, [*see Döm. Enc.*] "in dyeing, a decoction of the green branches and leaves imparts a deep gold color, of a brownish red shade; but the leaves alone impart a very deep yellow color. And the substances thus dyed retain a very agreeable fragrance for many months, even after being washed. The wood of the fig tree is almost indestructible, and was formerly much employed, in the East, for the preservation of embalmed bodies." [*Ib.*]

#### VARIETIES.

#### 1. ANGÉLIQUE. *Lindley. Bon Jard.*

MÉLITE, COURCOURELLE BLANCHE, *Hort. Soc. Cat.*

YELLOW ANGÉLIQUE. *Bon Jard.*

The fruit is small; its color yellow; form pyramidal; its pulp is white, but red at the centre, and of excellent flavor. This sort is cultivated in the neighborhood of Paris

#### 2. COMMON BLUE. *Mr. Neill.*

Sometimes called the *Purple Fig*; is of an oblong shape, and the tree is a great bearer. August.

#### 3. LARGE BLUE. *Lindley.*

LARGE PURPLE.

Fruit large, oblong; skin purple, or dark brown, covered with a thick blue bloom; pulp deep red, of a very good flavor. A very hardy sort, and a most excellent bearer.

#### 4. BOURDEAUX. *Lindley.*

POIRE FIGUE, VIOLETTE DE BOURDEAUX, *of the French.*

The fruit is long and pyramidal, rounded at the crown, its length three inches; its color is naturally a deep violet; its pulp is deep red or purple, succulent, and sweet. This fig is stated to be cultivated throughout France, and although not of very high flavor, it is very productive, producing annually two crops.

#### 5. FIGUE BLANCHE RONDE. *N. Duh. Pl. ix.*

ROUND WHITE.

This fig is esteemed the most suitable for the climate of Paris; it is the most multiplied, and is there preferred to all others for its productiveness, and the superior quality of its fruit. The fruit is turbinate, two inches in diameter; color at maturity yellowish green; the flesh is white, very sweet and delicious. The first crop begins to ripen at the

end of June. The second crop begins to ripen the middle of September, and lasts till hard frosts commence.

**6. BRUNSWICK.** *Mr. Neill.*

MADONNA.

The form is long and pyramidal; the color brown, with but little flavor. The Pomological Magazine and Lindley agree that it is sweet, extremely rich, and high-flavored; and that it is the largest and best purple fig they have, adapted to their climate. It is early.

**7. BLACK GENOA.** *Mr. Neill.*

An oblong fruit, of a dark purple color, almost black, and covered with purple bloom; the pulp is bright and high-flavored. The tree is a good bearer. End of August.

**8. PURPLE GENOA.**

The fruit is large and long; the skin dark purple at maturity; the flesh extremely sweet and delicious.

**9. WHITE GENOA.** *Mr. Neill.*

A large and almost globular fruit, of a yellowish color at maturity; the pulp is of a light red color, and of good flavor. The tree is considered rather a shy bearer.

**10. BLACK ISCHIA.** *Mr. Neill.*

Sometimes called *Blue Ischia*; is a very good sort; the fruit is short, of medium size, a little flattened at the crown; at maturity the skin is dark purple, or almost black, and the inside of a deep red; the pulp very high-flavored. The tree is a good bearer. End of September.

**11. BROWN ISCHIA.** *Mr. Neill.*

Sometimes called *Chestnut-colored Ischia*; a very large, globular fruit; its pulp is purple, sweet, and of very good flavor. It ripens early, and seldom fails of producing a good crop. Middle of August.

**12. GREEN ISCHIA.** *For.*

The fruit is oblong; its summit nearly globular; its skin is green, thin, and brown at maturity; flesh purple and high-flavored.

**13. YELLOW ISCHIA.** *For.*

The fruit is large, the color yellow, the flesh purple, and well-flavored.

**14. BLACK ITALIAN.** *Mr. Neill.*

A small, roundish fruit; the skin purple; its pulp of a dark red color, and high-flavored. The tree bears well.

**15. BROWN ITALIAN.** *Mr. Neill.*

A small, roundish fruit; the skin of a brown color at maturity; the pulp is red and high-flavored. The tree bears abundantly.

**16. LONG BROWN NAPLES.** *For.*

This fruit is long, compressed at its summit; the color dark brown; the flesh is of a reddish color, and of good flavor; the seeds are large.

**17. MALTA.** *Mr. Neill.*

A small, brown fruit; the pulp is sweet and well-flavored. When permitted to hang on the tree till it shrivels, it forms a fine sweetmeat.

**18. MARSEILLES.** *Lindley.*

*FIGUE BLANCHE of the French.*

The fruit is small; its form turbinate; its height two inches, its diameter nearly the same; color at maturity yellowish white; the pulp is white, dry, sweet, and rich.

**19. MURREY.** *Mr. Neill.*

*BROWN RED NAPLES.*

A large, globular-shaped fruit, of pretty good flavor; it is distinguished by the murrey-colored skin. September.

**20. NERII.** *Lindley.*

The fruit is small, turbinate, pale greenish yellow; pulp similar in color to that of the pomegranate. The richest of the yellow, white, or green species, with a slight, delicate, agreeable acid. The Nerii fig is cultivated by Mr. Knight, at Downton Castle.

**21. BROWN TURKEY.** *Lindley.*

*BROWN ITALIAN of Forsyth, according to Lindley's Guide.*

Fruit small and round; of a red or purple color; pulp very delicious.

**22. VIOLETTE.** *Lindley and Bon Jard.*

*FIGUE VIOLETTE.*

Fruit small, of a deep violet color; form globular, slightly turbinate, and about two inches in diameter; flesh white near the skin, the centre tinged with red, and excellent. This sort is cultivated in the vicinity of Paris for the market.

**23. SMALL EARLY WHITE.** *Mr. Neill.*

Its form is globular; the pulp sweet, but without much flavor. It ripens early. Indeed, it seldom fails of producing a crop.

## CULTIVATION, SOIL, &amp;c.

The fig tree is raised from seeds, from layers, and from cuttings. They require a friable, loamy, but not wet soil, and an airy, warm situation. They differ from most other trees in producing several crops annually. Even in the climate of Boston, I am persuaded that figs of good quality may be raised, if the trees are placed in warm situations, south of walls or buildings, on the declivities of hills, as at Argenteuil, near Paris. Mr. Knight has obtained, in his hot-house, eight successive crops in a year, by bending the limbs in a position below the horizontal. And Mr. Lowell, in his experiments, has succeeded in obtaining four crops. The tree will produce tolerable crops in the second year, if rung or decorticated; and by this process the maturity of the fruit is accelerated, and its size increased. Its maturity is also hastened by a practice which prevails in France, which consists in pricking the fruit with a straw or quill dipped in olive oil. In Italy, according to Loudon, a wound with a knife is sometimes made on the broad end of the fig, or a very small part of the skin is removed for the same purpose. Lastly, by the mode communicated to the public by the Hon. John Lowell, which is as follows:—

“The fig, like the fruit of the vine and peach, attains a certain size, and then remains stationary for several weeks, until it begins to color, when its volume, in three or four days, is greatly increased, often doubled, and even trebled. My figs [in a hot-house, 28th August] were dark green, showing no tendency to ripen. I took about a third of a tea-spoonful of sweet oil, and, dipping my finger in it, I rubbed it very slightly over every *alternate* fig, leaving the others untouched, as a test of the effects. At the end of three days, the color of most of those touched with oil began to change, and the size to increase; and now, on the fifth day, they have nearly the color of mature figs, and are twice and three times as large as those not touched with oil, which still remain of a dark green color.”

Mr. Phillips recommends that for a cold climate, like England, the tree should be table-trained; that is, to keep the branches tied to stakes about two feet from the ground; thus forming a regular star from the trunk. In the winter

they are easily lowered to the earth, and secured by hooks, and protected.

Mr. Loudon seems persuaded that by combining the system recommended by Mr. Knight with that recommended by the Rev. G. Swayne, the most desirable results would be produced; they are both calculated for cold climates.

Mr. Knight highly disapproves of training the branches of fig trees perpendicularly. If the stems are many, he reduces them to one only. And from the tops and parts near it, lateral branches are trained horizontally and pendently, and secured close to the wall. All troublesome luxuriance is thus restrained, and the wood becomes extremely fruitful.

Mr. Swayne trains his trees horizontally. His "specific" is designed to remedy the deficiency of bloom, in the early spring, on the whole of the last year's wood, excepting on a few joints at its extremities. The remedy which he has for a long time successfully practised, is, to simply rub off, as soon as they can be discovered, all the figs which are produced after midsummer on the same year's shoots. Those figs which thus exhaust the tree, and will never ripen without artificial heat, are thus removed, and new figs are formed in embryo, for the crop of the following year, on one, if not on both sides of every fig thus displaced. The tree should be examined once a week from the commencement of the operation, which should be begun early in August or September, and continued to the end of the season, according to latitude and climate.

**PROTECTION.** In the north of France, fig trees are protected in winter by being secured to the earth by hooks, and covered with soil. This is the mode adopted at Argenteuil, near Paris, where almost the whole population are employed exclusively in their cultivation. In England, Forsyth and others recommend to protect with straw, meadow hay, moss, &c., and over this branches of pine or other evergreen are secured. They flourish with little care and no protection in the Southern States. They will even ripen their fruits in open culture near Boston, but require greater heat to give them flavor.