Fig, Desert King

Ficus carica 'Desert King'

Height: 10 feet

Spread: 10 feet

Sunlight: ○ ◐

Hardiness Zone: 6b

Description:

An attractive, cool region variety producing especially sweet yellowish-green fruit with strawberry red flesh in mid-summer; better withstands late spring frosts; will attracts birds; prune in late winter to maintain size and shape

Edible Qualities

Fig, Desert King is a large shrub that is typically grown for its edible qualities, although it does have ornamental merits as well. It produces lime green fruit (technically 'pomes') with a yellow blush and red flesh which are usually ready for picking from mid to late summer. The fruits have a sweet taste and a fleshy texture.

The fruit are most often used in the following ways:

- Fresh Eating
- Cooking
- Preserves

Features & Attributes

Fig, Desert King has attractive dark green foliage with chartreuse veins on a plant with a round habit of growth. The lobed leaves are highly ornamental but do not develop any appreciable fall color. The fruits are showy lime green pomes with a yellow blush, which are carried in abundance in mid summer. The fruit can be messy if allowed to drop on the lawn or walkways, and may require occasional clean-up.



Fig, Desert King fruit
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder



Fig, Desert King fruit
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

This is a multi-stemmed deciduous shrub with a more or less rounded form. Its average texture blends into the landscape, but can be balanced by one or two finer or coarser trees or shrubs for an effective composition. This plant will require occasional maintenance and upkeep, and is best pruned in late winter once the threat of extreme cold has passed. It is a good choice for attracting birds to your yard, but is not particularly attractive to deer who tend to leave it alone in favor of tastier treats. It has no significant negative characteristics.

Aside from its primary use as an edible, Fig, Desert King is sutiable for the following landscape applications;

- Accent
- Hedges/Screening
- General Garden Use
- Orchard/Edible Landscaping
- Container Planting

Planting & Growing

Fig, Desert King will grow to be about 10 feet tall at maturity, with a spread of 10 feet. It has a low canopy with a typical clearance of 1 foot from the ground, and is suitable for planting under power lines. It grows at a medium rate, and under ideal conditions can be expected to live for 50 years or more.

This shrub is quite ornamental as well as edible, and is as much at home in a landscape or flower garden as it is in a designated edibles garden. It does best in full sun to partial shade. It does best in average to evenly moist conditions, but will not tolerate standing water. To help this plant achive its best flowering performance, periodically apply a flower-boosting fertilizer from early spring through into the active growing season. It is not particular as to soil pH, but grows best in rich soils, and is able to handle environmental salt. It is highly tolerant of urban pollution and will even thrive in inner city environments. Consider applying a thick mulch around the root zone in winter to protect it in exposed locations or colder microclimates. This is a selected variety of a species not originally from North America.

Fig, Desert King is a good choice for the edible garden, but it is also well-suited for use in outdoor pots and containers. Because of its height, it is often used as a 'thriller' in the 'spiller-thriller-filler' container combination; plant it near the center of the pot, surrounded by smaller plants and those that spill over the edges. It is even sizeable enough that it can be grown alone in a suitable container. Note that when grown in a container, it may not perform exactly as indicated on the tag - this is to be expected. Also note that when growing plants in outdoor containers and baskets, they may require more frequent waterings than they would in the yard or garden.