Weeping Ficus

Weeping fig or fig (*Ficus benjamina*) is popular as houseplants, in offices and interior landscaping. They have an elegant form and dense, glossy dark foliage. Slender branches arch gracefully from a light gray trunk. These small indoor trees are generally easy to grow if given enough light and proper care.

Ficus or weeping figs (*Ficus benjamina*) are popular indoor trees. Barbara H. Smith, ©2016 HGIC, Clemson Extension

**Height/Spread**

Weeping figs are usually sold as 3- to 6-feet tall potted trees or bushes. They can grow as tall as allowed indoors, but they are easily pruned to a suitable height.

**Ornamental Features**

Weeping figs are grown for their attractive form and foliage. They have smooth, gray bark and shiny, green oval leaves. Cultivars are available with variegated foliage, with wavy leaves and with pendulous branches.

Weeping fig stems are often trained in ornamental shapes. While the stems are young and flexible they may be braided, spiraled or twisted into shapes such as hearts.

Several young weeping fig trees (*Ficus benjamina*) may be braided together when the stems are young and flexible to provide an interesting shape. Barbara H. Smith, ©2016 HGIC, Clemson Extension

**Problems**

In the home, plant diseases are very rarely a problem. Too much or too little water plus insects and mites are the main problems. Root rot usually results from a soil mix that does not drain quickly or overly frequent watering.

The most common problem of weeping figs is leaf drop. Weeping figs seem to react to almost any stress by shedding leaves. Overwatering, underwatering, drafts, lack of nitrogen, and low light are all causes of leaf drop. Weeping figs often shed leaves when moved to a new location or repotted. If
growth conditions are adequate, the weeping fig will adjust to its new location, stop dropping leaves, and healthy new growth will appear.

The plants may be moved outside during the warmer months to an area in morning sun and afternoon shade. When moving a weeping fig inside for the winter, do not place the plant near a heat vent or draft, as this will cause excessive leaf drop. For more information on moving plants indoors and out see HGIC 1454, Indoor Plants - Moving Plants Indoors & Outdoors.

Spider mites and scales are frequent pests of weeping fig, but they may also be infested by mealybugs, aphids and thrips. For more information on houseplant insects see HGIC 2252, Common Houseplant Insects & Related Pests.

**Culture**

Weeping figs grow best in bright indirect or curtain-filtered sunlight. They will handle some direct sun if the humidity is high. Variegated cultivars grow best in somewhat lower light. Weeping figs prefer warm temperatures. Night temperatures of 65 to 70 °F and day temperatures of 75 to 85 °F are ideal.

During periods of active growth, keep the soil evenly moist. The soil should be allowed to dry slightly between waterings during the winter and other times of low growth. Plants should never be waterlogged or allowed to sit with water in their saucers. Weeping figs prefer high humidity levels. For more information on watering houseplants see HGIC 1459, Indoor Plants - Watering.

Healthy plants should be fed every month or two during the growing season with a liquid fertilizer. For more information on plant requirements please see HGIC 1450, Indoor Plants – Cleaning, Fertilizing, Containers & Light Requirements.

Wash weeping figs leaves occasionally with plain warm water. This can help the leaves "breathe" and improves their appearance.

Weeping figs can tolerate being slightly root bound. If the plants become too crowded, new leaves will be small and growth will slow. Repot in late winter or early spring, using a general-purpose potting soil. For more information on transplanting and repotting house plants see HGIC 1458, Indoor Plants - Transplanting & Repotting.

Plants can be pruned to shape as needed. They will even tolerate hard pruning to reduce their size if necessary. Reduce watering levels to severely pruned plants. Propagate at any season by air layering. Cuttings are best taken in summer.

**Cultivars**

- 'Bushy King' has small leaves with a narrow yellow edge on a dense compact plant.
- 'Bushy Prince' is similar to 'Bushy King' but with glossy, deep green leaves.
- 'Daniëlle' has sturdy, thick, deep green leaves. Its growth habit is pendulous. This variety is resistant to leaf drop.
- 'Monique' is a small cultivar with deep green leaves that are narrow and rippled along the edge.
- 'Judith' is a small-leafed variety that has green leaves with a cream-yellow border. 'Judith' has an attractive full shape, grows well with reduced light and sheds leaves minimally.
- 'Midnight Lady' has a compact, weeping growth habit. The leaves are very dark and curly.
- 'Wasana' especially suited to growing as bonsai. Its leaves are shiny green with white and the growth habit is irregular and weeping.
- 'Golden King' has a narrow irregular band of creamy yellow around each leaf.
- 'De Gantel' has a wide margin of chalky white around each leaf.
- 'Exotica' has light green leaves and a pendulous growth habit. Each leaf has a slight twist that adds to the gracefulness of the plant.
- 'Reginald' has leaves variegated in creamy lime with splashes of darker green along the midvein. It has a weeping habit similar to 'Exotica.'
- 'Golden Monique' has a growth habit similar to 'Monique,' and leaf color like 'Reginald.'
- 'Too Little' is a miniature that is ideal for indoor bonsai: It has tiny recurved glossy leaflets on twiggy branchlets.
- 'Variegata' has leaves strongly marked with pure white and gray green along the edges. New leaves are often pure white, but acquire green centers as they mature.
The variegated form of the weeping ficus (Ficus benjamina 'Variegata') has striking white and green leaves. Barbara H. Smith, ©2016 HGIC, Clemson Extension

Related Houseplant Species

**Longleaf Fig (Ficus binnendijkii)** has long, narrow willow-like leaves. The shiny deep green leaves are ten inches long and taper to a slender point. It is a superior choice to the weeping fig (Ficus benjamina) as it holds its leaves and does not shed as much.

**Fiddleleaf Fig (Ficus lyrata)** has thick dull green fiddle-shaped leaves that are eight to fifteen inches long and ten inches wide. It is important to keep the leaves dusted or rinsed to prevent the dust from interfering with light absorption.

**Rubber Plant (Ficus elastica)** is also in the fig family. Refer to the link below for further information. For more information on rubber plants see [HGIC 1510, Rubber Plant](#).


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