

Phytophthora Fruit Rot of Fig, *Ficus carica* L.¹

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The common edible fig, *Ficus carica* L., has been cultivated since the 4th century B.C. It was introduced into the New World by Spanish explorers during the 16th century A.D. (Condit 1955). In addition to a fruit crop, it is also grown as an attractive ornamental tree or shrub (Everett 1981).

CAUSAL AGENT AND DISEASE DEVELOPMENT: Of the numerous pathogenic fungi reported on edible figs (Alfieri *et al.* 1984; Farr *et al.* 1989), *Phytophthora palmivora* (E. J. Butler) E. J. Butler is one of the most serious (Butler 1919; El-Gholl and Alfieri 1984). It generally occurs on immature fruit located within 2 ft of the soil surface (El-Gholl and Alfieri 1984), but can also occur on fruits higher on the tree (Nisikado *et al.* 1941). *Phytophthora* spp. are known to overwinter in soil and plant debris with dispersal occurring from infested soil (Kuske and Benson 1983). Infection occurs mainly via zoospores splashed up onto young fruit from infested soil.

SYMPTOMS: Infected fruits of fig appear with a white, fluffy, mycelial growth overlying brownish tissues of the fruit. Depending upon conditions of disease development, fruits can be partially or wholly infected (Fig. 1), resulting in a soft, mushy rot of fruit tissues.

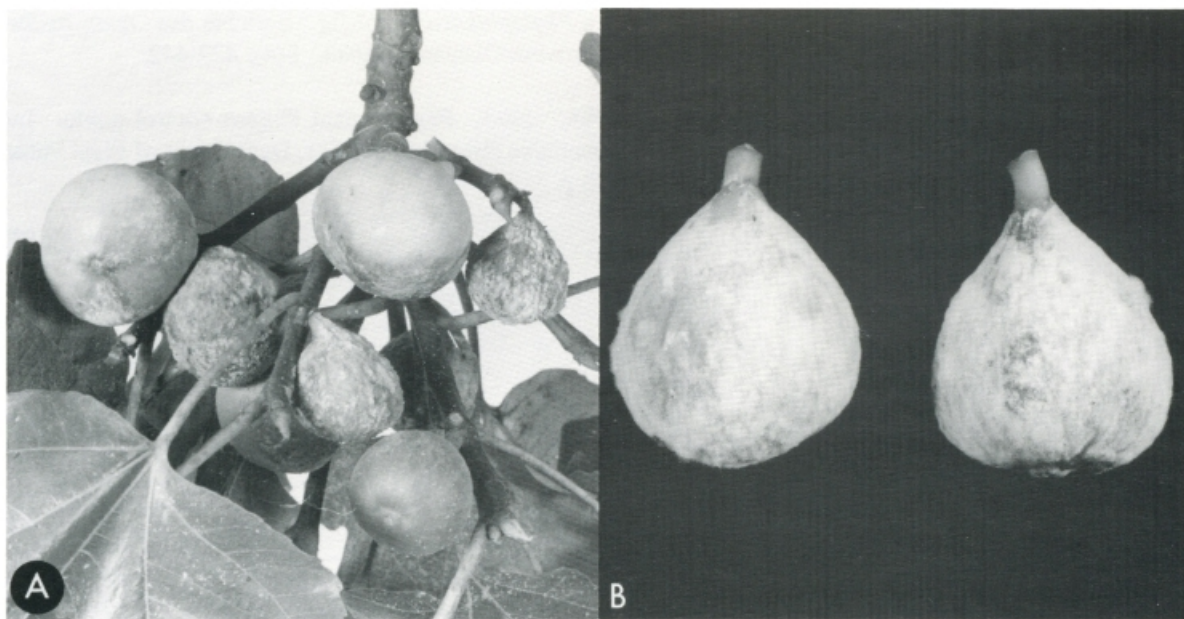


Fig. 1. A) Fruit of *Ficus carica* 'Green Ischia' naturally infected with *Phytophthora palmivora* B) Close-up of infected fruit. Photography credit: V. Jane Windsor (DPI #702805, #702801).

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CONTROL: No fungicide is EPA-approved for use on edible fig grown in Florida (Simone *et al.* 1993).

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