



# Ficus pumila

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*Ficus pumila* (creeping fig or climbing fig) is a species of flowering plant in the mulberry family, native to East Asia (China, Japan, Vietnam) and naturalized in parts of the southeastern and south-central United States. It is also found in cultivation as a houseplant. The etymology of the species name corresponds to the Latin word *pumilus* meaning dwarf, and refers to the very small leaves of the plant.

*Ficus pumila* is a woody evergreen vine, growing to 2.5–4 m (8 ft 2 in–13 ft 1 in). The juvenile foliage is much smaller and thinner than mature leaves produced as the plant ages. This plant requires the fig wasp *Blastophaga pumilae* for pollination, and is fed upon by larvae of the butterfly *Marpesia petreus*.

## Cultivation

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As the common name, "creeping fig" indicates, the plant has a creeping/vining habit and is often used in gardens and landscapes where it covers the ground and climbs up trees and walls. It is hardy down to 1 °C (34 °F) and does not tolerate frost. Therefore in temperate regions is often seen as a houseplant.

It can become invasive and cover structures and landscape features if not maintained and its growth contained. When climbing buildings or wooden structures, the woody tendrils can cling or root in, and damage structures and/or their surface finishes.

## Varieties and cultivars

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- *Ficus pumila* var. *awkeotsang* — awkeotsang creeping fig
- *Ficus pumila* var. *quercifolia* — oak leaf creeping fig
- *Ficus pumila* 'Curly' — curly creeping fig; crinkled leaf form

- *Ficus pumila* 'Variegata' and *Ficus pumila* 'Snowflake' — variegated creeping fig; variegated foliage

## Cuisine

The fruit of *Ficus pumila* var. *awkeotsang* is used in cuisine. In Taiwan, its fruit is turned inside out and dried. The seeds are scraped off and a gel is extracted from their surface with water and allowed to set and form a jelly known in Taiwan as aiyu jelly (or aiyuzi 愛玉子) and in Singapore as ice jelly (文頭雪).