

Ficus benjamina

Scientific classification

Kingdom : Plantae
Clade : Angiosperms
Order : Rosales
Family : Moraceae
Tribe : Ficeae
Genus : *Ficus*
Species : *F. benjamina*



Ficus benjamina

Description

Ficus benjamina is a tree reaching 30 m (98 feet) tall in natural conditions, with gracefully drooping branchlets and glossy leaves 6–13 cm, oval with an acuminate tip. The bark is light gray and smooth. The bark of young branches is brownish. The widely spread, highly branching tree top often covers a diameter of 10 meters. It is a relatively small-leaved fig. The changeable leaves are simple, entire and stalked. The petiole is 1 to 2.5 cm long. The young foliage is light green and slightly wavy, the older leaves are green and smooth; the leaf blade is ovate to ovate-lanceolate with wedge-shaped to broadly rounded base and ends with a short dropper tip. The pale glossy to dull leaf blade is 5 to 12 cm cm long and 2 to 6 cm wide. Near the leaf margins are yellow crystal cells ("cystolites"). The two membranous, deciduous stipules are not fused, lanceolate and 6 to 12 mm long.

F. benjamina is monoecious. The inflorescences are spherical to egg-shaped, shiny green, and have a diameter of 1.5 cm. In the inflorescences are three types of flowers: male and fertile and sterile female flowers. The scattered, inflorescences, stalked, male flowers have free sepals and a stamen. Many fertile female flowers are sessile and have three or four sepals and an egg-shaped ovary. The more or less lateral style ends in an enlarged scar.

Medicinal uses

- The bark of the root, the root itself, and the leaves are boiled in oil and applied on wounds and bruises.
- The juice of the bark (latex?) has a reputation in the Philippines for curing liver diseases.
- The pounded leaves and bark are applied as a poultice in the treatment of rheumatic headaches.