

# *Ficus benamina*

**Common name:** Weeping Fig, Benjamin tree

**Cultivar:** Ficus Panda

**Family:** Moraceae

**Habit:** Tree

**Location:** Botanical Garden

**Distribution:** It is native to Asia and Australia. The species is also naturalized in the West Indies and in the states of Florida and Arizona in the United States. It is one of the most common trees in Israeli cities and parks.

## **Description:**

*Ficus benamina* is a tree reaching 30 m 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 (3/8 to 1 inch) 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 long and 2 to 6 cm wide. The two membranous, deciduous stipules are not fused, lanceolate and 6 to 12 mm. It 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. The ripe figs (collective fruit) are orange-red and have a diameter of 2.0 to 2.5 cm.

## **Uses:**

In tropical latitudes, the weeping fig makes a very large and stately tree for parks and other urban situations, such as wide roads. It is often cultivated for this purpose. The fruit is edible, but the plant is not usually grown for its fruit. The plant is well known due to its medicinal potential. Its latex and some fruit extracts are used by indigenous communities to treat skin disorders, inflammation, piles, vomiting, leprosy, malaria, nose-diseases and cancer besides the use as a general tonic. The plant is also used as antimicrobial, antinociceptive, antipyretic, hypotensive and anti-dysentery remedy.

