**Introduction**

The dense, rapid growth of small, dark green, overlapping leaves on slender stems makes Creeping Fig a favorite vine to grow on walls where it lends a lacy pattern in its early stages of growth (Fig. 1). It needs no support to adhere to a wall. As twigs reach about 2-years-old, larger mature leaves develop on moderately thick, hairy stems. These grow out from the wall several feet forming dense growth. It also makes a low, dense ground cover only one or two inches high. Later developing larger leaves and woody growth, Creeping Fig grown as a ground cover needs regular pruning along the edges to keep it neat and within bounds. It is also well-suited for use in topiaries or hanging baskets.

**General Information**

- **Scientific name:** *Ficus pumila*
- **Pronunciation:** FYE-kus PEW-mil-luh
- **Common name(s):** Creeping Fig
- **Family:** Moraceae
- **Plant type:** ground cover
- **USDA hardiness zones:** 8B through 11 (Fig. 2)

**Planting month for zone 8:** year round  
**Planting month for zone 9:** year round  
**Planting month for zone 10 and 11:** year round

- **Origin:** not native to North America
- **Uses:** espalier; container or above-ground planter; hanging basket; cascading down a wall
- **Availability:** generally available in many areas within its hardiness range

**Description**

- **Height:** depends upon supporting structure
- **Spread:** depends upon supporting structure
- **Plant habit:** prostrate (flat); spreading
- **Plant density:** dense
- **Growth rate:** moderate
- **Texture:** fine

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Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: alternate
Leaf type: simple
Leaf margin: entire
Leaf shape: ovate
Leaf venation: reticulate; pinnate
Leaf type and persistence: evergreen
Leaf blade length: 2 to 4 inches
Leaf color: variegated
Fall color: no fall color change
Fall characteristic: not showy

Flower

Flower color: green
Flower characteristic: spring flowering

Fruit

Fruit shape: oval
Fruit length: unknown
Fruit cover: fleshy
Fruit color: green

Fruit characteristic: persists on the plant

Trunk and Branches

Trunk/bark/branches: typically multi-trunked or clumping stems
Current year stem/twig color: green
Current year stem/twig thickness: medium

Culture

Light requirement: plant grows in part shade/part sun; plant grows in the shade
Soil tolerances: occasionally wet; slightly alkaline; clay; sand; acidic; loam
Drought tolerance: high
Soil salt tolerances: poor
Plant spacing: 18 to 24 inches

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Other

**Roots:** not applicable  
**Winter interest:** no special winter interest  
**Outstanding plant:** not particularly outstanding  
**Invasive potential:** aggressive, spreading plant  
**Pest resistance:** no serious pests are normally seen on the plant

**Use and Management**

Growing in almost any light conditions, except all-day sun, Creeping Fig needs well-drained soil and moderate moisture until it becomes well established. When grown in the high heat conditions of full sun, leaves often take on a yellowish cast. Plant on 12 to 18-inch centers for quick establishment as a ground cover.

If you use this plant as a ground cover near a wall or building, it will grow onto the wall very quickly. To prevent this, clip the edge of the ground cover regularly. As the vine grows onto the wall, tendrels attach themselves and are very difficult to remove. The wall often needs to be repainted to cover up the tendrils that adhere to the wall.

Cultivars include: ‘Minima’, slender, small leaves; ‘Quercifolia’, tiny lobed leaves, somewhat like miniature oak leaves; and ‘Variegata’, leaves have creamy white markings.

Propagation is by cuttings which root easily.

**Pests and Diseases**

No pests or diseases are of major concern.