Ficus carica L.

Fig

Family: Moraceae
Range: In the western U.S., fig has only become a problem in California. It has also escaped cultivation in most southern and many eastern states.
Habitat: Riparian areas, canal banks, disturbed places, canyons, old homesteads, typically where soil moisture is available throughout the year.
Origin: Native to the Mediterranean region and introduced to California with the Spanish missionaries. Widely cultivated as an ornamental and for its edible fruits, but has escaped cultivation in some regions of California.
Impacts: In riparian areas and woodlands, fig can form dense clonal thickets which exclude native vegetation. Naturalized populations near cultivated fig can pollinate and reduce the marketability of cultivated fig harvests.
California Invasive Plant Council (Cal-IPC) Inventory: Moderate Invasiveness

Fig is a deciduous tree to 30 ft tall, with single or multiple trunks and smooth, pale grey bark. It has large, deeply lobed, palmate leaves and pear-shaped fruits. The leaves, stems, and immature fruits exude a milky white sap when cut. The sap is widely recognized to cause phytophotodermatitis, so full body covering should be used when handling plants. Trees often develop extensive shallow roots that produce new shoots, leading to dense clonal thickets.

Figs flower in several flushes from late winter through mid-summer. Male and female flowers are on separate trees, and pollination depends on an introduced species of wasp. The pear-shaped fruits mature from summer through fall. Fruits and seeds disperse primarily with birds. New plants from seed may bear fruit within 2 to 3 years. Fig also can reproduce vegetatively, from root sprouts or from stem fragments which are moved by floodwaters. Vegetative offspring may bear fruit within the first year.

NON-CHEMICAL CONTROL

Mechanical (pulling, cutting, disking)	Seedlings can be pulled or hoed. A weed wrench may be used to pull small trees, removing as much of the root as possible. Once trees are established, cut trees can resprout from the stump, roots, and stem fragments. Frequent repeated cutting to ground level may eventually deplete root reserves. However, this method has not been proven to successfully control naturalized populations.
Cultural	Grazing and burning are not effectively control methods for this species, as fig can resprout after damage by animals or fire.
Biological	Due to the cultivation of figs, there are no efforts to develop biological control agents for this species.

CHEMICAL CONTROL

The following specific use information is based on published papers and reports by researchers and land managers. Other trade names may be available, and other compounds also are labeled for this weed. Directions for use may vary between brands; see label before use. Herbicides are listed by mode of action and then alphabetically. The order of herbicide listing is not reflective of the order of efficacy or preference.

GROWTH REGULATORS	
Triclopyr *Garlon 3A*, *Garlon 4 Ultra*	**Rate:** Stem injection treatment: 100% *Garlon 3A* (amine formulation). Basal bark or drizzle treatment: 10% to 25% *Garlon 4 Ultra*, mixed with crop oil concentrate or basal oil. Basal cut stump or cut stump treatment: 25% to 100% of either formulation. **Timing:** These treatments are probably most effective late in the growing season but before leaves fall. When stem injections are applied too early in the season, the sap will exude the herbicide back out the cut regions and reduce control. **Remarks:** Triclopyr is a broadleaf-selective herbicide with very low soil residual. Basal bark treatments have been shown effective in experimental trials. Other treatments are expected to be effective based on work with other woody species.
AROMATIC AMINO ACID INHIBITORS	
Glyphosate *Roundup*, *Accord XRT II*, and others	**Rate:** Stem injection treatment: 100% concentrated product. Spot foliar treatment: 10% v/v in water to resprouts. Cut stump treatment: 20 to 100% v/v in water. **Timing:** These treatments are probably most effective late in the growing season but before leaves fall. **Remarks:** Glyphosate has no soil activity and is nonselective. This use is expected to be effective based on work with other woody species.
BRANCHED-CHAIN AMINO ACID INHIBITORS	
Imazapyr *Arsenal*, *Habitat*, *Stalker*, *Chopper*, *Polaris*	**Rate:** Stem injection treatment: 100% *Habitat* or *Arsenal*. Basal bark or drizzle treatment: 13% to 25% *Chopper*, mixed with crop oil. Cut stump treatment: 20% to 100% of any formulation. **Timing:** These treatments are probably most effective late in the growing season but before leaves fall. **Remarks:** Imazapyr has fairly long soil residual activity and is nonselective. This use is expected to be effective based on work with other woody species.

RECOMMENDED CITATION: DiTomaso, J.M., G.B. Kyser et al. 2013. *Weed Control in Natural Areas in the Western United States*. Weed Research and Information Center, University of California. 544 pp.