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Ficus lyrata

[Synonyms : *Ficus pandurata*]

FIDDLE-LEAF FIG is an evergreen shrub or tree. Native to tropical Africa it has small white-dotted green fruit (receptacles).

It is also known as Banjo fig, *Ficus* (French and Italian), Fiddle fig, Fiddle-leaf, Fiddle-leaf ficus, *Fiolfikus* (Swedish), *Geigengummibaum* (German), *Pandurita* (Spanish), and *Vioolbladplant* (Dutch).

The tree often begins life as an air plant (epiphyte) and strangler vine. Its seed is deposited on a leaf in the canopy of a 'host' tree. This sprouts and sends out aerial roots that drop down around the 'host' tree. The 'cuckoo' air plant becomes supported by its strangling aerial roots – by which time the crown of the 'host' tree is being smothered and blocked from light. This kills the 'host' and the strangler survives in its place supported by roots which are now digging into the ground.

Lyrata is derived from Latin *lyra* (harp, lute, lyre) meaning 'lyre-shaped'.

Young plants are sometimes cultivated as house plants.

Fiddle-leaf fig was introduced to France in 1895 (and some authorities claim this incursion outside its native habitat was the first).