

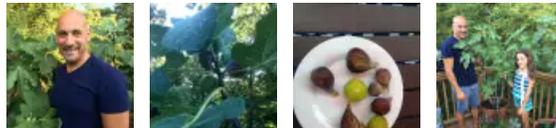
NEIGHBORS 08/31/2016

Poughkeepsie Gardener Gets 'Figgy' With Summer Trees

 Jeanne Muchnick



Poughkeepsie resident Michael Fanelli with his fig trees. Photo Credit: *Filomena Fanelli*



POUGHKEEPSIE, N.Y. -- A lot of guys spend their summer perfecting their golf swing or enjoying lazy days at the beach. Not so for Poughkeepsie resident Michael Fanelli. He, instead, was busy working his fig trees.

As reporter earlier, (<https://southwestdutchess.dailyvoice.com/neighbors/poughkeepsie-resident-relies-on-green-thumb-for-growing-fig-trees/648106/>) the electrician started growing figs four years ago because he enjoys gardening and thought it was an interesting focal point and a talking piece,

ADVERTISING

"Once I successfully grew my first tree, I was hooked," he said. "There are so many different varieties -- based on region, color, taste, size and even leaf type -- so I feel like I'm always trying something new. Each tree has its own characteristics, which makes it unique to that variety. My daughters, ages 5 and 10, get such a kick out of checking the trees to see if there are ripe figs, picking them, and even eating them, and yes, sometimes stealing them without telling me."

Fanelli said one of his favorite parts of the process is passing on what he's learned to others whether it's neighbors, family members or friends. "Believe it or not, there's a thriving underground fig community right here in the Hudson Valley!" he said.

Right now, his trees are currently in the ripening stage, after incubating for about 80 days. "Different varieties ripen at different rates, so some trees are already productive and bearing delicious fruit, while others are still in the incubation process," he explained. The later bloomers will ripen in the next couple of weeks, in time for September.

His goal at one point had been to sell the trees but, unfortunately, that didn't work out and he was only able to successfully grow three from clippings. That being said, he still has 25 trees on-site and plans to try again next season, now that he knows where he went wrong.

The end of summer, he said, is prime for fig producing which means he'll soon be making fig jam so he can enjoy the harvest well into the winter.

"Right now, my family and I are enjoying fresh figs, which pair beautifully with our homemade honey and artisan cheeses and crackers," he said. "We also often stuff them with gorgonzola and bake them for a sweet and savory treat."

[Click here to sign up for Daily Voice's free daily emails and news alerts.](#)

Share this story



Filomena Fanelli also contributed to this story.