

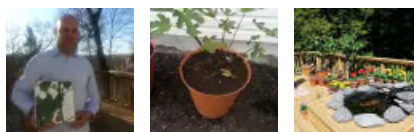
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Poughkeepsie Resident Relies On Green Thumb For Growing Fig Trees

 Jeanne Muchnick



Poughkeepsie resident Michael Fanelli with his favorite fig cookbook. Photo Credit: *Submitted*



POUGHKEEPSIE, N.Y. – Michael Fanelli is the first to admit his hobby of growing fig trees has turned into a bit of an obsession.

The Poughkeepsie electrician, who currently has 15 varieties in his garage, said he first got interested in testing out his green thumb after working at someone's home in Astoria, Queens and seeing the gorgeous fig tree in his client's backyard. "At first, I thought he was crazy; how can you grow a fig tree here? But then I started to get interested," he said.

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That was four years ago and now, through trial and error, along with an underground network of other tree-lovers he's met online, he has not only taught himself about the different varieties, textures and flavor profiles that come with fig trees, he is selling them.

Mostly, though, he uses them for personal gain, teaching his young daughters in about the love (and rewards!) of gardening. "They are very tropical looking so come May 1, I usually put them on my deck and enjoy the very lush ambiance," he said.

Fanelli also likes to cook with the fruits of his labor. He makes his own fig bread, creates his own homemade jam and enjoys learning new recipes from a fig cookbook he has. "The possibilities are endless," he said. "They're great wrapped in prosciutto as well as on pizza, he said. And, they make for great desserts."

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Filomena Fanelli also contributed to this story.

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