

# *Fig News*



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# Fig News

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## FROM THE EDITORS

The number of responses to the questionnaire in the first issue of *Fig News*, and the positive comments they contained, suggest that the launch of *Fig News* has been a success. Based on the questionnaire and their associated publication lists, we now have material to fill at least two more issues after this one - if your contribution is not in *Fig News 2* it will be in one of these!

Looking further ahead, we received rather few ideas on what more to include in the Newsletter. One-off suggestions included a guide 'how to rear fig wasps and get them to a specialist undamaged' that could be distributed to potential amateur collectors. Perhaps less practical was the suggestion that we turn *Fig News* into a refereed journal, so that fig papers can be published more quickly. Judy Bronstein also had some nice suggestions for alternative titles - 'Sycophile' (-phile) seems particularly appropriate - much better than our 'Facts and Fiction' or 'Figments'.

To give the newsletter a reasonable 'current affairs' content we are very keen to receive more (any?) reports on research news, recent publications, field trips, short notices and publishable letters. What are the controversial issues in fig biology - are there any? Please let us know!

STEVE COMPTON & TONY WARE

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## SHORT 1

**Fig Wasp Range Limits:** I have begun studying five fig species in northern Sonora, Mexico, at about 31° north latitude (*Ficus petiolaris*, *F. pertusa*, *F. radulina*, *F. cotinifolia* and *F. nitida*); all are successfully pollinated and many "cheater" species (primarily Torymids) are present. We have now found one *Ficus petiolaris* on the University of Arizona campus in Tucson (about 32° north) being visited by torymid species; this is about 200 miles north of the known range limit for *F. petiolaris*. Are these new records for the northern range limit of neotropical fig wasps?

JUDITH BRONSTEIN

## AN OLD WORLD RESPONSE

As a graduate of a Yorkshire University I can say with confidence that, like Texas, things are always bigger and better there. Its no surprise then, to claim for Yorkshire the most northerly 'natural' fig tree population in the old world. Thanks to the good old days of industrial pollution in Yorkshire, water temperatures in many rivers were artificially elevated. In the River Don near Sheffield, this allowed sewage-derived edible fig (*Ficus carica*) seeds to establish, with some plants now reaching 8 m high (Gilbert and Pearman 1988). Unfortunately, thermal pollution controls now seem to have made conditions unsuitable for germination, and no young plants were recorded. Sheffield is at about 53° north.

Reference: Gilbert, O.L. and Pearman, M.C. (1988). Wild figs by the Don. *Sorby Record* 25, 31-33.

STEVE COMPTON

