

## Reliable Physical Parameters for Determining Fruit/Seed Maturity Timing of *Ficus semicordata* Buch. in Kumaun Region of Central Himalaya

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### Abstract

Wild edible plants play an important role as food supplements during scarcity for local inhabitants. *Ficus semicordata* is commonly known as drooping fig. Plant parts are used for medicinal purposes. It is a common agroforestry tree in the Himalayan region growing from 750 to 1500 m elevation. The present study was carried out to assess the exact time of seed and fruit maturation and germination of *F. semicordata* in Nainital district of Kumaun Himalaya across 3 sites during two consecutive years 2017 and 2018. Fruit of *F. semicordata* were collected from the marked trees from all the sites till the availability of the fruits. Across all the sites the mean fruit size varied between  $190.24 \pm 0.46$  and  $395.14 \pm 3.56$  mm<sup>2</sup> in Yr-1 and  $135.56 \pm 3.69$  to  $516.86 \pm 1.26$  mm<sup>2</sup> in Yr-2. Across both the sites the colour change from green to pinkish brown appears as one of the indicator of maturity. In addition to the colour fruit moisture content between  $50.25 \pm 0.58\%$  and  $62.73 \pm 2.30\%$  coincided with maximum germination ( $48.0 \pm 0.06\%$  and  $85 \pm 4.61\%$ ).



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*Ficus*;  
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### Introduction

*Ficus semicordata* -Ham. ex Sm. (*syn. Ficus cunia* Buch.-Ham. ex Roxb.) is a multipurpose tree species belonging to the family Moraceae commonly known as Drooping fig, which is a small to medium sized tree up to 15 m tall, with an uneven crown. The leaf blade is frequently elliptic to lance-shaped and leaf margin is entire or coarsely toothed.<sup>1</sup> *F. semicordata* usually evergreen tree. Sometimes leafless in the dry season.<sup>2</sup> Flowering occurs between in the month

of May-June. It produced the main seed crop in the beginning of rainy season.<sup>3</sup> It occurs at the 750-1500 m elevation range in Himalayan region.<sup>4</sup> The leafless fruit-bearing branches develop at the base of the trunk and often become stolon like, trailing across the forest floor.<sup>5</sup> Young fruits and whole parts of the tree are used as a medicine. It is a potential fodder for goat and cattle.<sup>1</sup> The leaves are also used for polishing wood, ropes are made in by the fibre of bark and species is important for agroforestry.<sup>6</sup>

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