

Now using the facts you've gathered in scavenging for information within the article, discuss in small groups how the significance of fig trees in the past and the present are paving the way for new and innovative agricultural breakthroughs amid global warming. Write a short paragraph to summarize the discussion and choose one member to share your group's ideas with the whole class.³

Common Core Standard(s) Met:

CCRA.R.2 Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.

¹ Example answers:

“See how their leaves are wilting? It helps the plants conserve water in the heat.”

“Fig trees, however, survive with minimal water, have little need for fertilizer and are resistant to many pests.”

“They may burn in a forest fire but will grow back the following year.”

“When a fig tree is cut down, a new shoot will generally spring from its stump.”

“Wild figs may even grow on cliffs or in walls, where no soil can be seen and no water reach.”

² Example answers:

“Back in 2006, in the ruins of a prehistoric village in the Jordan River Valley, a team of archeobotanists found proof that figs had been cultivated 11,400 years ago—long before the domestication of wheat, barley or legumes.”

“From its culinary use to its religious symbolism, as evoked in the Bible and the Qur’an, the fig has played a role in the birth of civilization.”

“Believed to be indigenous to northern Asia Minor, figs have been cultivated around the Aegean and the Levant since ancient times.”

³ Answers might discuss how the future is likely to entail less rainfall and higher temperatures and incorporate the natural resilience of fig trees as well as the staying power of the fig as the oldest-known agricultural crop in the world. Answers might include new scientific advances to empower Mediterranean farmers to grow the most promising types of figs and even breed figs to create new varieties of fig even better adapted to climate change.