





A fig is actually an inverted receptacle, known as a synconium that encloses three types of simple male, female and sterile gall flowers, and later the seeds. Male flowers carry pollen, female flowers have long styles for easy pollination, while stalked gall flowers feed the larvae of fig wasps. Fig and wasp form one of the most extraordinary plant-animal associations we know with each species of fig pollinated by only one type of wasp.

## Flower, Inverted!

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Only a pregnant female wasp can wriggle through the opening or ostiole into the interior of a fig to lay her eggs. Brushing male and female flowers, thus effecting pollination, she seeks out gall flowers, and deposits her eggs plus a little growth stimulant for the gall flower to enlarge so the larva has enough food. Then she will die. Eggs become larvae then pupae and finally a new generation of male and female wasps. To imagine that a small winged insect can figure this all out, recognize where and when to enter and exit for which purpose, is simply amazing.