

SISN Partner Gives Ficus Tips To Martha Stewart

Chris Raimondi's horticultural tips were featured on Martha Stewart Living in March.



RIDGEWOOD, NJ--Christopher S. Raimondi, CLP and president of Raimondi Horticultural Group, was a featured guest on the March 28th Martha Stewart Living television show. Raimondi joined Stewart on her nationally syndicated TV hit to discuss the Ficus. Highlights from the show are featured on her Web site, marthastewart.com as well as on Raimondi's, raimondihg.com.

"The producers of Martha Stewart Living were interested in having me as a guest because of my work in environmental horticulture management and education," said Raimondi who teaches interior plant courses at the New York Botanical Garden and educational institutions, and serves as a co-chair of the Plants for Clean Air Council. "Ficus are extremely popular throughout the world. It was a great pleasure to be asked to speak about them on Martha Stewart's show."

Raimondi brought over 10 different Ficus species to the Martha Stewart Living set. He spoke about the history, use, care and popularity of four well-known species. He and Stewart began the show with a discussion of the Ficus benjamina or Weeping Fig which Raimondi cited as the backbone of most house Ficus varieties. The Ficus benjamina is native to China, Australia and the South Pacific. Raimondi showed Stewart how the tree's soft gray bark set off its lustrous foliage.

Stewart was particularly interested in Raimondi's pruning techniques that he demonstrated while presenting the Ficus benjamina and the Ficus pumila or Creeping Fig, its common name. Pruning a tree correctly is as essential to its health as water and helps to keep it full. Raimondi reported that the Ficus pumila needs moist air and does not do well in direct light. He gave recommended watering techniques and soil choices. He added that in nature Ficus grows where there are dry and wet seasons and said it is natural for them to drop their leaves in times of drought.

Raimondi and Stewart moved then to the Ficus elastica, known as a rubber tree. It is native to South Asia and can grow to 100-150 ft. in its native habitat. Its milky sap was the main source for rubber until the late 19th century.

"This plant makes an excellent houseplant and is available in bold colored cultivars such as Decora and Tricolor," explained Raimondi to Stewart. He added that she should not overwater it, give it bright, indirect light, and plant it in a rich, fast draining medium." Raimondi showed the Ficus lyrata or Fiddle Leaf Fig and said it gets its common name from the shape of its foliage. According to Raimondi, this Ficus is native to tropical Central and West Africa and is considered to be a medium sized plant. He demonstrated watering techniques with the Ficus lyrata and added that misting is essential for trailing types such as the Ficus radicans ed., Variegata

Trailing Fig. And, Stewart closed the show with Raimondi's suggestions for placing Ficus trees decoratively indoors.

Martha Stewart is the chairman and chief executive officer of Martha Stewart Living Omnimedia LLC, an international multimedia company that includes a monthly magazine, Martha Stewart Living, a quarterly magazine, Martha Stewart Weddings, her television show, books written by her, a syndicated newspaper column, askMartha, a national radio show, a mail-order catalog and an online merchandising business.

Christopher S. Raimondi founded Raimondi Horticultural Group, Inc. (RHG) as an interiorscape company in 1974. A Certified Landscape Professional (CLP), Raimondi is a Co-Chairman for the Plants for Clean Air Council, a member of the Associated Landscape Contractors of America's (ALCA) Interior Landscape Council and the past Chairman of ALCA's Interior Landscape Council, and a Partner in the Symbiot InteriorScape Network.

Raimondi is perhaps best known throughout the green industry for his dedication to education and training. He teaches Horticultural Science at the New York Botanical Garden, the New Jersey Botanical Garden and at various local schools and colleges. His involvement in education keeps him at the forefront of technology and research. He uses what he teaches in the workplace. He and his employees are committed to increasing environmental awareness on the benefits of green foliage in all living spaces.

Under his leadership, RHG has grown into a full service horticultural firm that provides exterior and interior landscaping, plant maintenance, holiday decorating and holiday services, plant rentals, and gift baskets to commercial and residential clients. RHG is based in northern New Jersey and serves the New York tri-state region. RHG is a Symbiot InteriorScape Network Partner.