**Genus to know:**

**Ficus**

**FIGURE 5-20**

The pollination of most figs is an intricate process involving species-specific wasps that mate and lay their eggs in the ovaries of short-styled female flowers within the indlosed inflorescences, or syconia. When the young wasps emerge, they escape from the syconia where they were born, but they carry some pollen from this syconium to the female flowers in the syconium where they will mate and lay their eggs. (After von Mohlau)

**Keys:** Leaves alternate, often 2-ranked, but sometimes spiral; sometimes lobed; entire to serrate with pinnate to palmate venation; stipules present; flowers unisexual; stamens 1-5 + distinct; Fruit a drupe, dehiscent drupe, or achene, often closely clustered together forming a multiple fruit; widespread from tropical to temperate regions; Carpels > 2; apical placenta; sap a milky latex; Wasp pollinated; Young figs epiphytic; Ficus lacks stipules.

**Ficus important ornamental: looks like tiny round balls on stem.**