Morus alba fruitless cultivars
White Mulberry

Edward F. Gilman and Dennis G. Watson

INTRODUCTION

This group of mulberries is fruitless, a definite plus when compared to the mess created by the abundant fruits of the common White Mulberry (Fig. 1). The plant quickly forms a dark green mass of foliage from a short trunk, or group of trunks. This gives many people reason to plant the tree. However, it is quite sensitive to ice damage, has invasive surface roots and drops leaves in summer.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Scientific name: Morus alba fruitless cultivars
Pronunciation: MOE-russ AL-buh
Common name(s): White Mulberry
Family: Moraceae
USDA hardiness zones: 3B through 9 (Fig. 2)
Origin: not native to North America
Uses: Bonsai; shade tree; specimen; no proven urban tolerance
Availability: somewhat available, may have to go out of the region to find the tree

DESCRIPTION

Height: 20 to 30 feet
Spread: 30 to 45 feet
Crown uniformity: irregular outline or silhouette
Crown shape: round; spreading
Crown density: dense
Growth rate: fast
Texture: coarse

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: alternate (Fig. 3)
Leaf type: simple
Leaf margin: lobed; dentate; serrate
Leaf shape: ovate
Leaf venation: pinnate
Leaf type and persistence: deciduous
Leaf blade length: 4 to 8 inches; 2 to 4 inches
Leaf color: green
Fall color: yellow
Fall characteristic: showy

Flower

Flower color: green
Flower characteristics: inconspicuous and not showy; spring flowering

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2. Edward F. Gilman, associate professor, Environmental Horticulture Department; Dennis G. Watson, associate professor, Agricultural Engineering Department, Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida, Gainesville FL 32611.
**Fruit**

There is no fruit on this tree.

**Trunk and Branches**

**Trunk/bark/branches:** droop as the tree grows, and will require pruning for vehicular or pedestrian clearance beneath the canopy; showy trunk; should be grown with a single leader; no thorns

**Pruning requirement:** requires pruning to develop strong structure

**Breakage:** susceptible to breakage either at the crotch due to poor collar formation, or the wood itself is weak and tends to break

**Current year twig color:** green; gray

**Current year twig thickness:** thin

**Culture**

**Light requirement:** tree grows in part shade/part sun; tree grows in full sun

**Soil tolerances:** clay; loam; sand; acidic; alkaline; extended flooding; well-drained

**Drought tolerance:** high

**Soil salt tolerance:** good

**Other**

**Roots:** surface roots are usually not a problem

**Winter interest:** no special winter interest

**Outstanding tree:** not particularly outstanding

**Invasive potential:** little, if any, potential at this time

**Ozone sensitivity:** sensitive or moderately tolerant

**Verticillium wilt susceptibility:** not known to be susceptible

**Pest resistance:** long-term health usually not affected by pests

**USE AND MANAGEMENT**

Fruitless White Mulberry should be grown in full sun or partial shade on any well-drained soil. Although it is tolerant of air pollution and dry conditions, the tree will perform its best on moist soils. Leaves often drop in dry weather.

The species is invasive and galls cause a mess on walks and driveways. For this reason, only fruitless cultivars are recommended.

Propagation is by cuttings or grafts.

**Pests**

Pests are scale and mites.

**Diseases**

Leaf spot, bacterial blight, powdery mildew, and cankers may infect this tree.