



Morus alba fruitless cultivars White Mulberry¹

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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

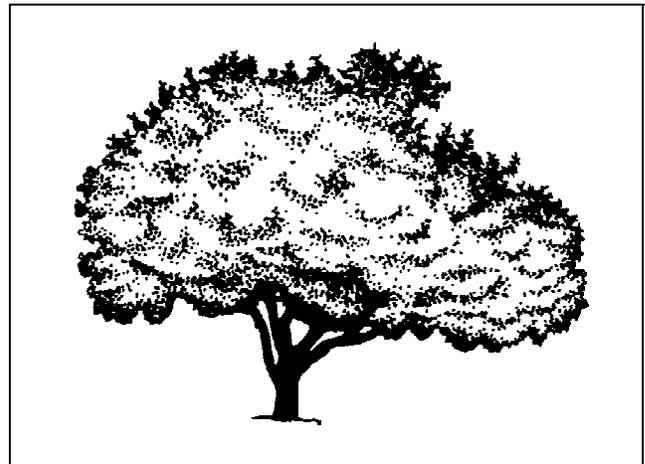


Figure 1. Middle-aged White Mulberry.

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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Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

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 fruits cause a mess on walks and driveways. For this reason, only fruitless cultivars are recommended.

Propagation is by cuttings or grafts.

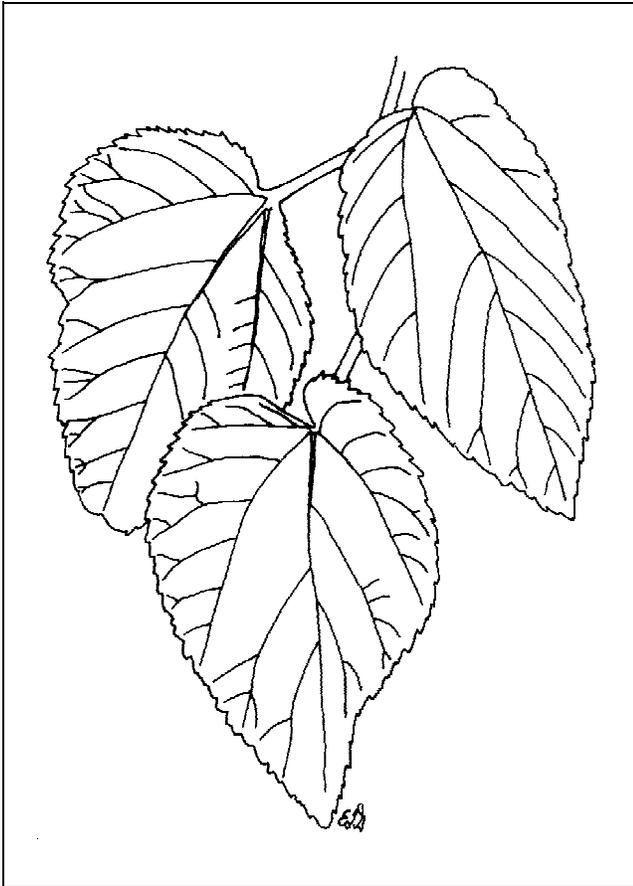


Figure 3. Foliage of White Mulberry.

Fruitless cultivars include: 'Bellaire', 'Chaparral', 'Hempton', 'Stribling', and 'Urban'.

Pests

Pests are scale and mites.

Diseases

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