

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. 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.

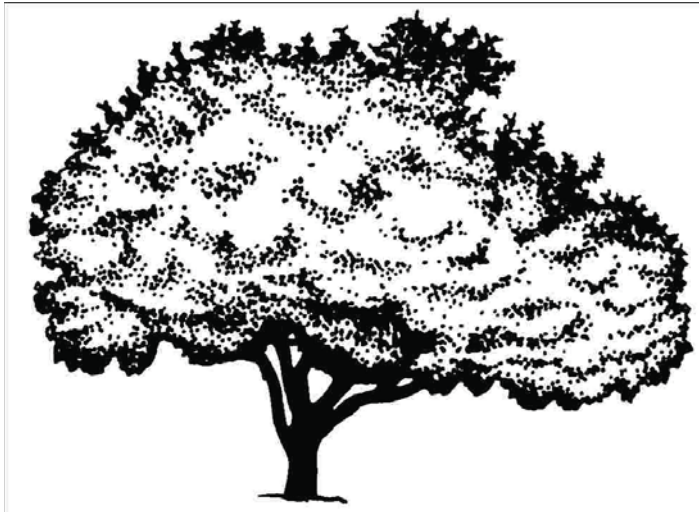


Figure 1. Middle-aged *Morus alba* fruitless cultivars: White Mulberry

General Information

Scientific name: *Morus alba*

Pronunciation: MOE-russ AL-buh

Common name(s): White mulberry

Family: *Moraceae*

USDA hardiness zones: 3B through 9B (Fig. 2)

Origin: not native to North America

Invasive potential: little invasive potential

Uses: shade; specimen; bonsai

Availability: somewhat available, may have to go out of the region to find the tree



Figure 2. Range

Description

Height: 20 to 30 feet

Spread: 30 to 45 feet

Crown uniformity: irregular

Crown shape: round, spreading

Crown density: dense

Growth rate: fast

Texture: coarse

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Foliage

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



Figure 3. Foliage

Flower

Flower color: green
Flower characteristics: not showy

Fruit

Fruit shape: no fruit
Fruit length: no fruit
Fruit covering: no fruit
Fruit color: no fruit
Fruit characteristics: no fruit

Trunk and Branches

Trunk/bark/branches: branches droop; showy; typically one trunk; thorns
Pruning requirement: needed for strong structure
Breakage: susceptible to breakage
Current year twig color: green, gray
Current year twig thickness: thin
Wood specific gravity: unknown

Culture

Light requirement: full sun, partial sun, or partial shade
Soil tolerances: clay; sand; loam; acidic; alkaline; extended flooding; well-drained
Drought tolerance: high
Aerosol salt tolerance: unknown

Other

Roots: not a problem
Winter interest: no
Outstanding tree: no
Ozone sensitivity: sensitive
Verticillium wilt susceptibility: resistant
Pest resistance: resistant to pests/diseases

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.

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.