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# Morus rubra

This plant has poison characteristics. See below.

**Common Name(s):**

Red mulberry

**Categories:**

[Native Plants](#), [Poisonous Plants](#), [Trees](#)

**Comment:**

*Morus rubra*, commonly known as red mulberry, is a medium sized, upright spreading to rounded, deciduous tree that typically grows to 35-50' (less frequently to 80') tall. It is native to rich woods, bottomlands and wood margins from Massachusetts, southern Ontario and Minnesota south to Florida and Texas. It is noted for its often lobed leaves, milky sap, reddish-brown bark and edible fruits. Trees are monoecious or dioecious. The bark is gray-brown with long scaly ridges.

**Regions:** Mountain, Piedmont, Coastal Plains

**Seasons of Interest:**

**Blooms:** Spring

**Nut/Fruit/Seed:** Summer

**Wildlife Value:** The Red mulberry is moderately resistant to damage from deer. It is sometimes considered to be a host plant for Red Admiral butterfly. Its fruits are eaten by many birds, especially gray catbirds and northern mockingbirds, foxes, opossums, squirrels and racoons.

**Insects, Diseases, or Other Plant Problems:** Borers may be a problem with this plant, particular in the South. Whiteflies mass on some trees. Bacterial blight may kill foliage/branches. Coral spot cankers may cause twig dieback. Bacterial leaf scorch, powdery mildew, root rot and witches broom may also occur. Watch for scale, mites and mealybugs. Weedy self-seeding and messy fruit are concerns.

The fruits are relished by birds but dropped fruit can cause maintenance issues such as staining concrete walkways, patios, and cars, so be aware of where their canopy will extend when choosing the location to plant one of these trees. These trees can become weedy. Herbicides are not effective, the best management is to hand pull seedlings when young.

**Height:**

35-50 ft.

**Flower:**

The Red mulberry has unisexual greenish flowers in small catkin-like spikes that appear in early spring with male and female flowers usually appearing on separate trees (dioecious). Trees with only male flowers obviously never bear fruit. Fertilized female flowers are followed by sweet blackberry-like edible fruits (to 1" long) that are reddish to dark purple in color. The fruits are sweet and juicy and may be eaten off the tree. The fruits are also used for jellies, jams and wines. The fruits are not commercially sold because they have very short "shelf lives" and pack/ship very poorly

**Zones:**

4-8

**Habit:**

Deciduous

**Site:**

The Red mulberry is best grown in rich, moist, well-drained soils in full sun to part shade. It will be at its best in full sun. Prune in late fall or winter to avoid bleeding. It is easily grown from seed or cuttings and may also self-seed somewhat prolifically.



Morus rubra Leaves and Berries



Morus rubra Leaves Closeup

**Texture:**

Medium

**Form:**

Upright spreading to rounded

**Exposure:**

Full sun, part shade, shade

**Fruit:**

Berries

**Family:**

Moraceae

**Origin:**

USA, NC

**Distribution:**

Throughout

**Poison Part:**

Unripe fruit and milky sap from all parts

**Poison Delivery Mode:**

Ingestion

**Symptoms:**

Hallucinations and stomach upset

**Edibility:**

EDIBLE PARTS: Ripe fruits are eaten raw or made into pies, jellies, or jams; also used in breads, muffins, and cakes

**Toxic Principle:**

Unidentified

**Severity:**

CAUSES ONLY LOW TOXICITY IF EATEN.

**Found in:**

Forest or natural areas, in moist woods, fencerows

**Width:**

35-40 ft.

**Leaf:**

The Red mulberry has ovate to oblong-ovate, toothed, usually dark green leaves (to 5" long) that have heart-shaped bases. The leaves can be quite variable, however, ranging from unlobed to deeply lobed and from rough-textured to glabrous on the upper surfaces. Lobed leaves are more frequently found on new shoots and unlobed leaves are more frequently found in tree crowns. The leaves turn yellow in fall.

**Tags:**

naturalize, weed, weedy, birds, edible fruits, wildlife, showy



NCCES plant id 1100



Morus rubra Emerging Berries

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Morus rubra Autumn Leaves

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Morus rubra Fruit

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