

Mulberry

Morus sp.

Family: **Moraceae**

The origin and distribution:

Mulberry, the genus *Morus* of about 10 species of medium to big-sized trees in the family Moraceae and their sweet edible fruits. Mulberries are native to temperate Asia and North America, and several species are cultivated for their fruits and as ornamentals. Mulberry plants are also important as food for silkworms. Mulberry trees grow fast and the wood can be used in a house furniture manufacture.



Botanical description:

Mulberries are deciduous tree, growing 8 to 10 m high, and the leaves +sometimes simple or lobed leaves and have serrated edges, that are alternately arranged along the stems. The buds flowers are mixed, and laterally bearing on green growths no older than a year, the flowers are green yellow and are also it laterally position. Flowers appear in early spring, Individuals can be monoecious (bearing both male and female flowers) or dioecious (bearing only male or female flowers). The male flowers come out of the lower leaves. While the feminine flowers come out of the upper leaves of the fruit branches.

The minute flowers are borne in tight catkin clusters. Each fruit develops from an entire flower cluster and is formally known as a multiple fruits. The mulberry fruits are need cross pollination and are usually easily done by wind and insects. The fruits somewhat resemble blackberries and ripen to white, pink, red, purple or black purple. The trees bear fruit from **April until July**. Ever bearing mulberry fruits don't even need to be picked if you shake the tree lightly, they simply drop to the ground when they're ripe. Many people leave a sheet beneath their tree during these months to collect the berries as they fall.

Climatic Requirements and Soil:

The perfect cultivation of mulberry in temperate areas with low humidity, and it tolerate low winter temperatures as its tolerance to summer temperatures is considered high. Mulberry trees can grow in all types of soils except rough sand soils, very clay soils or salty, and the best suitable soils are low-humidity mixture soils.

Ripening and harvesting fruits:

It is easy to distinguish ripe fruits of mulberry by changing color to red or dark black and disappearing this light red color for colored varieties, but white varieties usually take honey color after maturity. Mulberry fruits usually appear from April to July and the fruits fleshy and juicy.

Major Species:

The red mulberry (*Morus rubra*), native of eastern North America is the largest of the genus, often reaching a height of 21 m. It has two-lobed, three-lobed, or un lobed leaves and dark purple edible fruits.

White mulberry (*Morus alba*), native to Asia but long cultivated in southern Europe, is so called because of the white fruits it bears, its leaves are used as food for silkworms. It is naturalized in eastern North America. Several useful varieties of the white mulberry are the cold-resistant Russian mulberry (*M. alba*, variety *tatarica*), introduced into western North America for shelter belts and local timber use, and there are some variety are fruitless, such as ‘Stribling’ and ‘Mapleleaf’ cultivars.

Black mulberry (*Morus nigra*), the most common species, is a native of western Asia that spread westward in cultivation at an early period. Up to the 15th century it was extensively grown in Italy for raising silkworms, but it has since been superseded by white mulberry. Now an introduced species in North America, it is mainly cultivated for its large juicy purple-black fruits, which are superior in flavour to those of red mulberry.