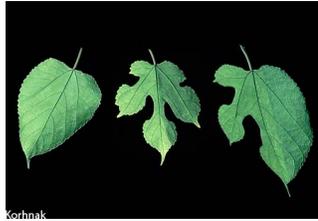


Red Mulberry

Latin/Botanical name *Morus rubra*



- ❖ The native Red Mulberry is a small to medium-sized deciduous tree that reaches a height of 35 to 50 feet (occasionally to 70) and lives up to 125 years.
- ❖ Its bark is dark reddish-brown, fissured, and scaly.
- ❖ Its leaves are broadly oval or heart-shaped, 4-10 inches long, entire, mitten (single lobed), **and** three-lobed all on the same tree!
- ❖ The upper surface of the leaves are noticeably ROUGH, similar in texture to fine sandpaper. The underside are covered with soft hairs.
- ❖ The leaves turn a brilliant yellow in autumn.
- ❖ The non-native White Mulberry (*M. alba*) has similar leaves but they have a SMOOTH lustrous upper surface. Both Red and White Mulberries have edible red/purple fruit.
- ❖ A good website to tell the two mulberry trees apart is www.extension.purdue.edu/extmedia/fnr/fnr_237.pdf
- ❖ Red Mulberry trees are planted for its fruit and as an ornamental. The mulberries are used to make jams, jellies, pies, juice, and wine. Besides just eating the fruit, Native Americans used the inner fibrous bark to make cloth, mixed dried fruits with animal fat for pemmican, and used parts of the tree medicinally.
- ❖ Many species of birds and small mammals (raccoons, opossum, and squirrels) eat the fruits of Red Mulberry.
- ❖ Red Mulberry is becoming increasingly scarce in the central portions of its range (not around here), possibly due to a bacterial disease. There is also a problem of it, in the wild, hybridizing with the White Mulberry that was introduced here from China to start a silk industry in the 18th century and several more times over the centuries, as late as the 1940s. Silkworms feed on the White Mulberry's leaves. Commercial silk growing in America failed. This hybridized version can make tree identification increasingly difficult.
- ❖ Here in Pittsfield, there are big Mulberry trees by The Girls' Club, 165 East Street along its First Street side and in front of The Berkshire Music School at 30 Wendell Ave.

This Tree of the Month series is brought to you by the City of Pittsfield, RSVP and Pittsfield Tree Watch, a volunteer group that promotes tree stewardship and education in our City.

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