

Celtis australis - Growing Guide

Celtis Australis

Southern nettle tree

W.J. Bean, in his authoritative five volumes describing 'Trees and Shrubs hardy in the British Isles', reserves fairly harsh criticism for Celtis as a genus when he states 'The nettle trees have no beauty of flower, these being small and greenish. Celtis make elegant and shapely specimens yet of no particular merit or beauty'. You might well think that this is not a tree for you but, if rare and unusual plants are what you collect in your garden, then it may be worth a place.

If you had to find a reason for growing hackberries or nettle trees it is undoubtedly their autumn colour. *C. australis* originates from the Mediterranean and is a spreading deciduous large tree in maturity. It has obovate or lance shaped, rough, coarse leaves which are dark green above and a downy light green below. The leaves turn a brilliant yellow in autumn which we have admired, on occasion, in the nursery.

C. australis produces rounded edible red fruit which eventually turns brown and appears on a slender stalk.

Bean talks about this tree not being hardy when grown by him 70 years ago but today it is now considered to be fully hardy. Full sun in a hot dry location is what will work best.



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Celtis occidentalis



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