

Morus - Growing Guide

Growing Morus

Commonly known as Mulberry

Very few older or more established gardens with orchards and vegetables in our villages will not have a mulberry tree growing somewhere.

Mulberries were introduced to England as early as the 16th century and *Morus alba* was grown by King James I who unsuccessfully attempted to establish a silkworm industry in the south of England using the tree on which silkworms feed in hotter Mediterranean climates.

Morus nigra, the black mulberry, is the best species for producing edible fruit. It is a rounded tree growing eventually to 20-30ft with a similar spread. The leaves are ovate to heart shaped with a rough texture on the topsides. They are around 6in long. In late spring and early summer separate tiny pale green male and female catkins are produced. The female flower cluster develops into a rounded or oblong edible raspberry like fruit. On *M. nigra* these are green at first then turning red and finally dark purple when they are ripe and ready for picking. Ripe black mulberry fruit has a pleasant taste and a slightly acidic flavour.

Morus alba, the white mulberry, is a smaller growing tree achieving a height of only about 10ft with a width in maturity of perhaps 5ft. The leaves are also ovate to heart shaped but a little larger. They turn a gorgeous yellow in the autumn. The fruits are whitish changing to reddish pink or black in some forms. When ripe the fruits are sweet and edible.

Mulberries grow best in full sun in a moist but well drained soil. You often see them growing as a central feature in or beside front lawns. They are also suitable for a range of different locations in town or coastal gardens.

This is a tree most easily propagated from hardwood cuttings taken in late autumn and overwintered in a cold frame in a mixture of sand and soil. Even thick sections of older wood will often root in this traditional manner.



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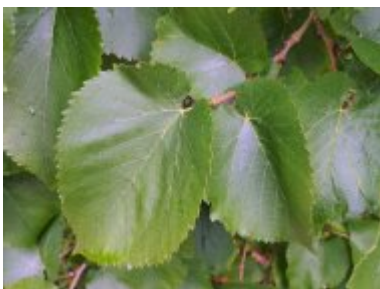
Morus



Morus nigra



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