

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.



Celtis australis



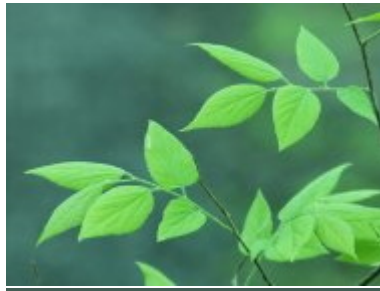
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