



Tree Species No. TTS19

Morus alba, Family Moraceae

In its natural environment Morus alba is a deciduous, small-medium sized tree with large smooth heart shaped, deeply lobed leaves. It is resistant to drought and frost but has a relatively short life span.

Common names: White mulberry.

Distribution: The white mulberry is native to China but is now widely distributed throughout Asia and Southern Europe. It was introduced to England in the 16th Century.

Ecology

Rainfall: Grows best in areas with approximately 1000mm.

Temperature: 12-29°C. *Morus alba* grows best under temperate conditions.

Altitude: 250-2200m.

Soil type: Grows on sandy to heavy soils and even gravelly soils but dislikes strongly alkaline soils. *Morus alba* grows best on well drained soils.

Botany

Height: 6-15m but may reach 24m.

Diameter at breast height:

Crown: Spreading form.

Flowers: The flowers are unisexual, and so are either male or female. Flowers are approximately 0.3cm long and are borne on spikes, the male spikes are 2.5cm long and the female spikes are 1.5-2cm.

Fruit: The berries are initially white but become a reddish pink or deep purple once ripe. The fruit are sweet and edible.

Uses

Main: The leaves are used to feed silkworms and it is sometimes cultivated for its edible fruits. The wood is used for making sports equipment and it is often cultivated as an ornamental tree.

Others: To make cabinets and in China the bark is used to make paper.

Cultural instructions

White mulberry can be grown from seed or branch cuttings, and it coppices well.

Seeds: The seeds are small with approximately 250,000-700,000 seeds per kg. The seeds can be extracted by mashing the fruit, soaking in water and allowing the pulp to float off. Alternatively flail the dry fruit with sticks. Store the seeds in dry and cold conditions.

Pre-treatment: Stratify the seeds in moist sand for 60 days at 5°C to achieve a germination rate of 70%.

Germination: 70%.

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