

Morus alba/rubra

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Introduction

Morus alba, known by its common name white mulberry is native to northern China as well as Bermuda and introduced in North America. It is used in China to nourish silkworms. Even though it's called 'white mulberry', the name has nothing to do with the color of its fruits; the colors can range from white to red to purple. There are three common types of mulberry trees: white mulberry, red mulberry and black mulberry. Mulberry trees are similar in appearance and can be distinguished by their leaves, bark and fruit details.



picture of plant from Botanical Garden



picture of plant from Botanical Garden

In a 2015 article in the royal gazette, it was verified that mulberry trees are native to Bermuda. The article states that in 2000, the newly retired Dr. David Wingate focused on unveiling whether mulberry trees were grown in Bermuda and if the red mulberry was in fact a native, as mentioned by early settlers. In 2013, Wingate teamed up with Dr. Kevin Burgess, an expert in mulberry trees and DNA barcoding, traveled around the island collecting specimens, and sent them to Burgess' lab at Columbus State College. Results verified that red mulberries were indeed native to our Island as well as white mulberries, and that they could hybridize to form red and white mulberry hybrids.

Mulberry trees have catkins(a long slim flower which often has no petals allowing the trees to reproduce as the female flowers are pollinated by male flowers) Male catkins are yellowish-green

and measure $\frac{3}{4}$ – 2 inches long (2 – 5 cm). Female catkins are green with white 'hairs', shorter and more oval. Compared to black and red mulberries, white mulberries are not as intense in flavor.

Red Mulberry vs. White Mulberry

Names:

Firstly, their scientific names are different. Red mulberry is named *Morus rubra* whereas white mulberry is named *Morus alba*.

Native range:

White mulberry is native to Northern China and introduced in North America where it is considered invasive. Red mulberry is native to eastern North America.

Leaves:

White mulberry has lustrous leaves, whereas red mulberry has leaves that are dull.



red mulberry leaves



white mulberry leaves

Bark:

Red mulberry trees have gray-coloured barks with a scaly texture and straight ridges. White mulberry trees have warm coloured barks, tan or brownish and have ridges that twist back and forth.



red mulberry bark



white mulberry bark

Resources

<https://bplant.org/compare/140-141>

<https://www.royalgazette.com/other/news/article/20150321/mulberry-tree-mystery-is-solved/>

<https://leafyplace.com/mulberry-trees/>

pictures:

<https://bplant.org/compare/140-141>