

# Morus alba Fruitless Cultivars: White Mulberry<sup>1</sup>

Edward F. Gilman and Dennis G. Watson<sup>2</sup>

## Introduction

This group of mulberries is fruitless, a definite plus when compared to the mess created by the abundant fruits of the common white mulberry. The plant quickly forms a dark green mass of foliage from a short trunk, or group of trunks. This gives many people reason to plant the tree. However, it is quite sensitive to ice damage, has invasive surface roots and drops leaves in summer.



Figure 1. Middle-aged *Morus alba* fruitless cultivars: White Mulberry

## General Information

**Scientific name:** *Morus alba*

**Pronunciation:** MOE-russ AL-buh

**Common name(s):** White mulberry

**Family:** *Moraceae*

**USDA hardiness zones:** 3B through 9B (Fig. 2)

**Origin:** not native to North America

**Invasive potential:** little invasive potential

**Uses:** shade; specimen; bonsai

**Availability:** somewhat available, may have to go out of the region to find the tree



Figure 2. Range

## Description

**Height:** 20 to 30 feet

**Spread:** 30 to 45 feet

**Crown uniformity:** irregular

**Crown shape:** round, spreading

**Crown density:** dense

**Growth rate:** fast

**Texture:** coarse

1. This document is ENH-567, one of a series of the Environmental Horticulture Department, UF/IFAS Extension. Original publication date November 1993. Revised December 2006. Reviewed February 2014. Visit the EDIS website at <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu>.

2. Edward F. Gilman, professor, Environmental Horticulture Department; Dennis G. Watson, former associate professor, Agricultural Engineering Department, UF/IFAS Extension, Gainesville, FL 32611.

The Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (IFAS) is an Equal Opportunity Institution authorized to provide research, educational information and other services only to individuals and institutions that function with non-discrimination with respect to race, creed, color, religion, age, disability, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, national origin, political opinions or affiliations. For more information on obtaining other UF/IFAS Extension publications, contact your county's UF/IFAS Extension office.

U.S. Department of Agriculture, UF/IFAS Extension Service, University of Florida, IFAS, Florida A & M University Cooperative Extension Program, and Boards of County Commissioners Cooperating. Nick T. Place, dean for UF/IFAS Extension.

## Foliage

**Leaf arrangement:** alternate (Fig. 3)  
**Leaf type:** simple  
**Leaf margin:** lobed, serrate, dentate  
**Leaf shape:** ovate  
**Leaf venation:** pinnate  
**Leaf type and persistence:** deciduous  
**Leaf blade length:** 2 to 4 inches, 4 to 8 inches  
**Leaf color:** green  
**Fall color:** yellow  
**Fall characteristic:** showy



Figure 3. Foliage

## Flower

**Flower color:** green  
**Flower characteristics:** not showy

## Fruit

**Fruit shape:** no fruit  
**Fruit length:** no fruit  
**Fruit covering:** no fruit  
**Fruit color:** no fruit  
**Fruit characteristics:** no fruit

## Trunk and Branches

**Trunk/bark/branches:** branches droop; showy; typically one trunk; thorns  
**Pruning requirement:** needed for strong structure  
**Breakage:** susceptible to breakage  
**Current year twig color:** green, gray  
**Current year twig thickness:** thin  
**Wood specific gravity:** unknown

## Culture

**Light requirement:** full sun, partial sun, or partial shade  
**Soil tolerances:** clay; sand; loam; acidic; alkaline; extended flooding; well-drained  
**Drought tolerance:** high  
**Aerosol salt tolerance:** unknown

## Other

**Roots:** not a problem  
**Winter interest:** no  
**Outstanding tree:** no  
**Ozone sensitivity:** sensitive  
**Verticillium wilt susceptibility:** resistant  
**Pest resistance:** resistant to pests/diseases

## Use and Management

Fruitless white mulberry should be grown in full sun or partial shade on any well-drained soil. Although it is tolerant of air pollution and dry conditions, the tree will perform its best on moist soils. Leaves often drop in dry weather.

The species is invasive and fruits cause a mess on walks and driveways. For this reason, only fruitless cultivars are recommended.

Propagation is by cuttings or grafts.

Fruitless cultivars include 'Bellaire', 'Chaparral', 'Hempton', 'Stribling', and 'Urban'.

## Pests

Pests are scale and mites.

## Diseases

Leaf spot, bacterial blight, powdery mildew, and cankers may infect this tree.