

72. PAPER-MULBERRY*

Broussonetia papyrifera (L.) Vent.

Small to medium-sized introduced tree 40 ft (12 m) high with short trunk often irregular shaped, 1 ft (0.3 m) in diameter, broad spreading crown, and with whitish or *milky sap*. **Twigs** slightly stout, slightly zigzag, greenish gray, with stiff hairs when young. **Buds** conical, greenish brown, with 2 or 3 scales marked by lines; no end bud.



Leaves mostly alternate in 2 rows, sometimes opposite, long-stalked, broadly ovate, 3-8 in (7.5-20 cm) long and nearly as wide, long-pointed, notched at base, edges coarsely saw-toothed and *often irregularly* and deeply lobed with 3 or more lobes, with 3 main veins from base, *gray green* and *rough hairy above*, *beneath* paler and *soft gray hairy*.

Flowers male and female on different trees, small, greenish, in spring; male in cylindrical catkins, female crowded in ball (head).

Fruits multiple, round, $\frac{3}{4}$ in (2 cm) in diameter, orange, with many small individual pointed red fruits, juicy and sweet, in early summer.

Bark light gray, smooth or with long narrow shallow furrows.

Wood with thick pale yellow or whitish sapwood, heartwood when present small and dark brown, ring porous, coarse- and uneven-textured, lightweight (sp. gr. .38), weak. Not used in U.S., elsewhere sometimes for woodenware.

Planted for ornament and shade across Okla. except panhandle, persisting on old homesites and sometimes escaping. Introduced in e. half of U.S. except n. border, escaped and naturalized locally. Native of Malaysia and Polynesia and long cultivated and naturalized in s. and e. Asia. Zone 6.

Adapted to cities, being tolerant of poor soil, dust, smoke, and heat and fast-growing. However, the roots invade sewers and produce abundant sprouts, forming roadside thickets. In the South Pacific islands and Hawaii, cloth was made from the fibrous inner bark. Also, as indicated by the common and scientific names, paper was prepared from the bark by ancient Chinese.