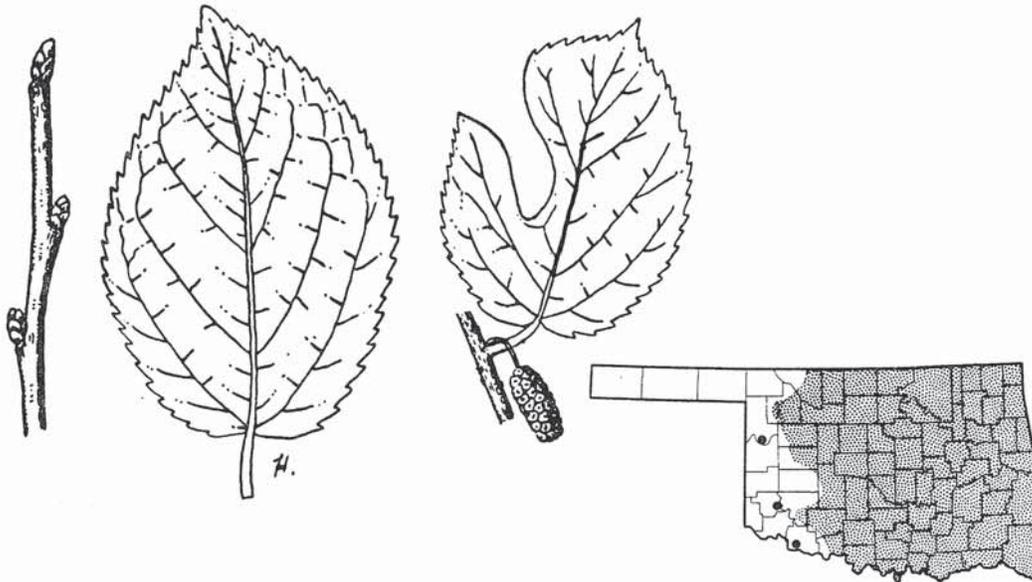


76. RED MULBERRY

Morus rubra L.

Medium-sized tree 50 ft (15 m) high and 1 ft. (0.3 m) in diameter, with broad rounded crown and with whitish or *milky sap*. **Twigs** slender, slightly zigzag, light brown, mostly hairless. **Buds** blunt, slightly turned to side, spreading, brown, with several nearly hairless scales in 2 rows; no end bud.



Leaves in 2 rows, ovate, 4-7 in (10-18 cm) long, 2½-5 in (6-13 cm) wide, abruptly long-pointed, with 3 main veins from straight or slightly notched and often unequal base, edges coarsely saw-toothed, often with 2 or 3 lobes on vigorous twigs, *dull dark green* and *rough above*, beneath paler and *soft hairy*; turning yellow in autumn.

Flowers tiny greenish, crowded in narrow clusters (spikes) in spring with leaves, male clusters 2 in (5 cm) long, female clusters 1 in (2.5 cm) long mostly on different trees.

Fruits (multiple) oblong edible *mulberries* 1-1¼ in (2.5-3 cm) long, red to dark purple, composed of many tiny beadlike 1-seeded fruits, sweet and juicy, in late spring.

Bark gray or brown, fissured into long narrow scaly plates.

Wood orange yellow to golden turning dark brown on exposure, with very narrow pale yellow or whitish sapwood, ring porous, uneven-textured, moderately heavy (sp. gr. .59), moderately hard, durable and resistant to decay. Used locally for fenceposts, furniture, interior finish, farm implements, and barrels.

Uncommon in moist soil, especially flood plain forests, through Okla. except w. edge and panhandle. Scattered and widespread in hardwood forests, e. half of U.S. except n. border. Zone 4.

A shade tree and suitable for planting for wildlife. Though seldom abundant, mulberries are eaten by people and wildlife. Choctaw Indian women wove cloaks from the fibrous inner bark of young mulberry sprouts from roots of cut trees. Other uses were rope and mats.