



Nursery News

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Celtis occidentalis

Common Hackberry

Hackberry, a member of the elm family, is one of the most versatile shade trees. While preferring moist, bottomland soils, the Hackberry is highly adaptable to many adverse conditions including rocky, dry or compacted soil, soils of various pH, drought, flooding, pollution, wind and salt. This tough, rapidly growing tree provides shade, windbreak and erosion control, and is often used as a street tree.

The Hackberry is a large shade tree with a rounded crown and many spreading slender branches.

It can be susceptible to a variety of insects, causing some disfiguration, and is generally seasonal. The Hackberry is not affected by Dutch Elm Disease.

Celtis is the Greek word for Hackberry tree (from Scottish Hagberry, a species of cherry tree) and occidentalis means 'of or from the west'.

The fruit, eaten by birds and mammals, the branching and cavities in the bark for nesting, and the foliage eaten by butterfly larvae makes it one of the best trees for wildlife.

Native Americans used the bark medicinally to treat sore throat and crushed the fruit to add flavor to foods. The wood was used as the fuel source for alter fires at prayer ceremonies.



Flowers: Greenish yellow monoecious flowers form hanging dense clusters in early spring.

Bark: Deeply furrowed grayish brown bark with corky warts provides interesting winter texture.



Leaves: Up to 4" long, the lance shaped, finely toothed, ovate leaves have asymmetrical bases and lace pattern formed by the veins. Fall color is chartreuse to green.



Fruit: Small green to orange brown pea size drupes become purple black when ripe in late summer.

