

## PAPER-MULBERRY

*Broussonetia L'HÉR.*

Mulberry Family—Moraceae

### Paper-mulberry

*Broussonetia papyrifera* (L.) Vent.

**FORM:** broadly spreading deciduous tree to 45 feet with milky sap; spreads by root shoots to form thickets

**BARK:** light brown to gray, smooth or slightly furrowed

**TWIGS:** gray-green to gray-brown, hairy with conspicuous orange lenticels

**PITH:** large, white with a green partition at each node

**BUDS:** conical, outer bud scale grayish-brown and striped; terminal bud absent

**LEAVES:** alternate or sometimes nearly opposite on fast-growing branches, simple, variously lobed or unlobed, with toothed margins, softly gray-hairy beneath, rough above; venation palmate

**FALL LEAF COLOR:** yellow-green

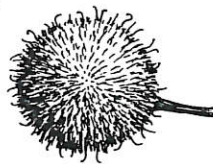
**STIPULES:** linear, falling early

**LEAF SCARS:** nearly circular, elevated

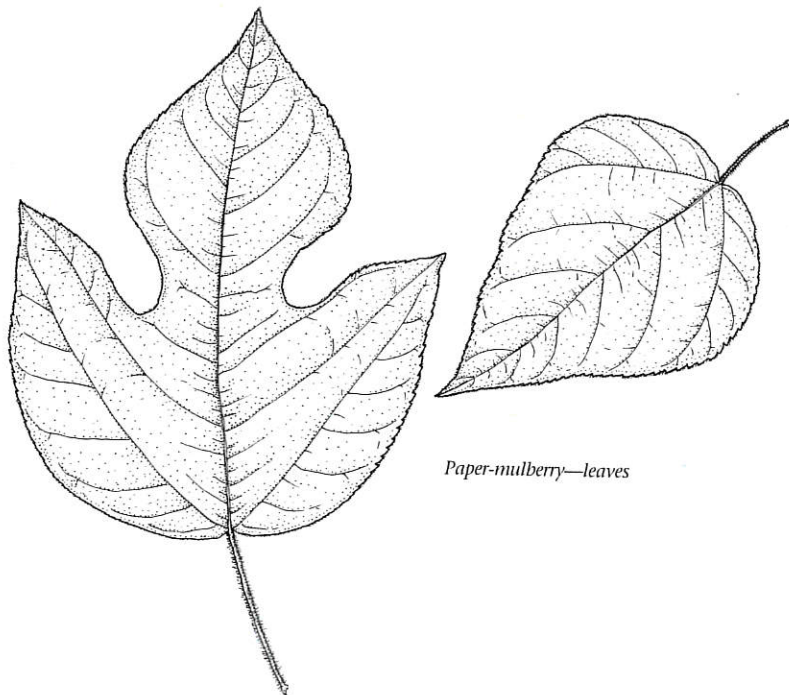
**FLOWERS:** unisexual, staminate and pistillate on separate plants (dioecious); staminate flowers in drooping catkins, flowers with 4 sepals and 4 stamens; pistillate flowers in dense spherical heads, each flower with 4 fused sepals and a stalked ovary with a long, slender style

**FRUIT:** spherical, orange-red, about  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch in diameter, consisting of the fused fruits of an entire inflorescence (a syncarp)

**SEEDS:** slightly flattened and about  $\frac{1}{8}$  inch long

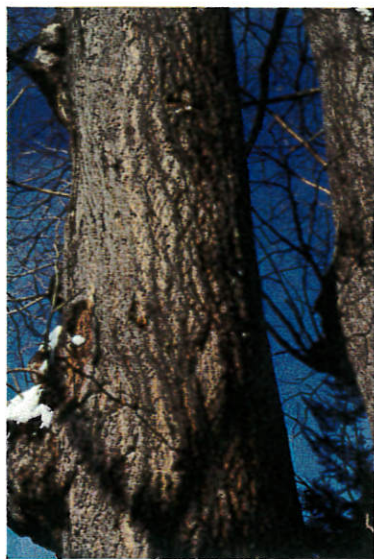


Paper-mulberry—fruit x1



Paper-mulberry—leaves





*Paper-mulberry—bark*



*Paper-mulberry—flowers x1*

**WOOD:** light in color and weight

**CURRENT CHAMPION:** Philadelphia County, diameter 2 feet 6 inches, height 45 feet, spread 50 feet

Paper-mulberry is often found in urban areas, where it colonizes roadsides, rail-road rights-of-way, and vacant lots. Native to China and Japan, it was formerly cultivated as a shade tree and has become widely naturalized in the eastern United States. Weedy tendencies have discouraged its further use as an ornamental.

In Japan paper is made from the fibrous bark, and in Polynesia, the bark is used to make tapa cloth. In the American southwest, Native Americans used the plant as a source of a narcotic substance; in addition the seeds were strung to make ceremonial necklaces.