

The Mulberry*

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Mulberries, which were much appreciated during the 19th century, have now almost disappeared. However, in my opinion, there is still a place for mulberries not only in arboretum collections, but also in the garden, and in national parks where the fruit can provide food for birds and other fauna.

White Mulberry

The white mulberry is still used commercially in the growing of silk worms, but its fruit has never excited very much interest. In the U. S., the varieties Caparum and Reichert are available.

Red Mulberry

The red mulberry was fairly popular during the 19th century in the U. S., and a number of selections were introduced. Illinois Everbearing is still available from nurseries, but I have been unable to locate any nurseries that propagate any of the older selections.

Hicks, the oldest American variety, was first cultivated in 1850. It bore fruit over a three or four month period. The fruit has been described as one to one-and-a-half inches long, nearly black, and insipidly sweet. It was grown more for chicken and hog feed than for human consumption.

New Amsterdam was one of the varieties grown in North Carolina (R. J. Stadherr, N. C. State Univ.).

Stubbs was first known in 1875. It was considered to have the best quality. Fruit was one-and-a-half to two inches long, with a vinous flavor, and matured midseason (H. S. Wolfe, Univ. of Fla.).

Townsend was first propagated in 1904. Fruit was much like Hicks, but even better. It matured very early (Wolfe).

Travis was a variety with very large sweet fruit (Wolfe).

Illinois Everbearing is a chance seedling found in White County Illinois. Tree is very vigorous. Fruit is dark red at maturity, sub-acid in flavor, medium in size, and ripens early June to mid-August (J. C. McDaniel, Univ. of Illinois).

Black Mulberry

The variety picture with the black mulberry is very confused due to the many local names that are in use. A list of these varieties might include Black English, Black Tabor, Great Spanien Black, Noirde Sijan, Queensland Black, Californian Giant, Shaht-out, Shami, Weeping Russian, and Wellington.

I would be grateful to any reader for information on any white, red or black mulberries, or sources of them. I am attempting to accumulate information and a collection of all existing mulberries at the Chevreloup Arboretum, near Versailles, France. My address is 36 rue de la Glaciere, Paris XIII, France.

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*This article was adapted by the editor from a letter and notes sent to him by the author.