



HACKBERRY

Celtis occidentalis

Native Range

A native to Kansas, hackberry is found growing throughout the state. It prefers a deep moist soil, but will tolerate seasonal droughts on upland sites.

Mature Size

On favorable soils it may reach a height of 60 to 70 feet.

Growth Rate

Growth is slow at first, but after a few years often averages 12 to 24 inches annually.

Leaves, Stems and Fruit

The leaves are simple and alternately arranged on the twig. They are 2 ½ to 4 inches long and 1 ½ inches wide with small teeth along the leaf edge. Leaf color ranges from light green above to paler green below. Flowering occurs in the spring as leaves begin to emerge with both male and female flowers borne on the same tree. Twigs are gray-brown and slender. Bark is grayish and rough with wart-like projections. The fruit is a dark purple drupe (berry-like), approximately 1/4 inch in diameter which remains on the tree most of the winter.

Use

Windbreaks

Because of its ability to tolerate drought conditions, hackberry is a good choice for windbreak plantings. It can be used as an interior row in a multi-row windbreak if care is taken, especially on poor sites, to prevent overtopping by faster more vigorous trees. It may also be used as a single-row field windbreak.

Timber

Hackberry is a commercial timber species. The wood is used in furniture construction, boxes, crates and pallets.

Wildlife

The fruit provides an excellent source of winter food for a variety of birds including quail, pheasant and turkey. Both whitetail and mule deer browse on twigs and foliage.

Adaptation

Statewide.

Soil

Hackberry grows best on deep, moist, fertile soils along streams. However, once established, hackberry will tolerate upland soils.

Spacing

In windbreak plantings, in row spacing ranges from 8 to 18 feet and 20 to 24 feet between rows in multiple row plantings.

Culture

One-year-old, bare-root seedlings, 18 to 24 inches tall are used in plantings. Initial survival is good with adequate site preparation and weed control.

Pests

Hackberry is susceptible to a variety of insect attacks that can cause some disfiguration of the leaves and branches, but they are of minor importance.