

# RED MULBERRY

## *Morus rubra* L.

OTHER COMMON NAMES: Mulberry, Black Mulberry.

FORM: Usually 30-60 feet high, trunk diameter 1-1 1/2 feet, may reach height of 70 feet with diameter of 3-4 feet, trunk usually short, subdividing near the ground, crown broad, round-topped and dense.

BARK: On old trunks rather thin, dark grayish-brown, peels off in long narrow flakes.

TWIGS: Slender, slightly zigzag, smooth, semi-lustrous to dull, pale reddish or orange-brown, finally dark reddish-brown.

LEAVES: Alternate, simple, broadly ovate to ovate-orbicular, 3-5 inches long, 2 1/2-4 inches wide, acute at apex, cordate at base, margin coarsely and occasionally doubly serrate, occasionally 3-5 lobed with deep, broad sinuses, thin, membranous, veiny, dark bluish-green, slightly rough on upper surface, pale, pubescent below.

FLOWERS: Staminate and pistillate flowers separate and usually on separate trees; staminate in narrow spikes 2-2 1/2 inches long, from the axils of the inner bud scales or lower leaves; pistillate in oblong, sometimes androgynous, pedunculate, densely flowered spikes from the upper leaf axils.

FRUIT: A fleshy, multiple fruit (syncarp), 1-1 1/4 inch long, composed of many small drupes, dark purple at maturity, sweet and edible; seed ovoid, sharp-pointed, light brown.

WINTER BUDS: Terminal bud absent; lateral buds alternate, ovate, rounded or bluntly pointed at apex, somewhat divergent and laterally inclined, chestnut-brown, 1/4 inch long.

WOOD: Wood soft, light, weak, coarse-grained, durable in contact with the soil, pale orange, turns russet-brown on exposure to light, thick lighter sapwood.

USES: Pulp. Historical uses: posts, furniture, railroad ties, barrel staves.

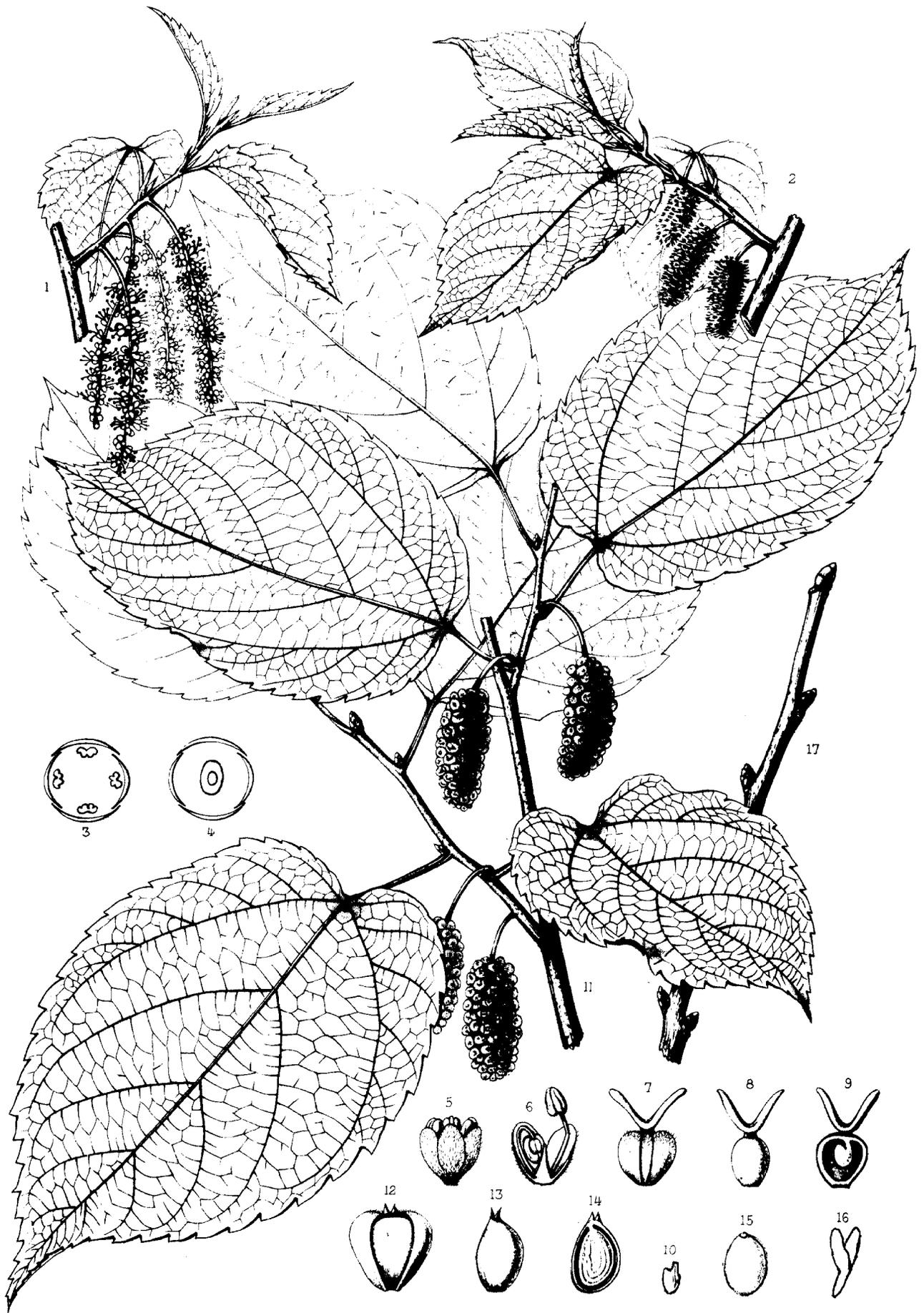
HABITAT: Prefers deep moist soils along stream courses, in rich woods, fertile slopes.

DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS: 3-veined leaves with veins sunken; its berry-like fruit; milky juice of twigs; roots bright yellow.

DISTRIBUTION IN ALABAMA: Common throughout the state, but nowhere abundant.

### EXPLANATION OF PLATE

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| 1. A flowering branch with staminate flowers                             | 8. A pistil                              |
| 2. A flowering branch with pistillate flowers                            | 9. Vertical section of a pistil          |
| 3. Diagram of a staminate flower   | 10. An ovule                             |
| 4. Diagram of a pistillate flower  | 11. A fruiting branch                    |
| 5. A staminate flower before the exertion of the stamens                 | 12. A fruit enclosed in the fleshy calyx |
| 6. Vertical section of a staminate flower with one stamen partly exerted | 13. A nutlet                             |
| 7. A pistillate flower   | 14. Vertical section of a                |
|  | 15. A seed                               |
|  | 16. An embryo                            |
|  | 17. A winter branchlet                   |



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