PLANT FACT SHEET

Celtis laevigata Willd.

GENUS *Celtis* **FAMILY** Cannabaceae

COMMON NAMES Sugarberry, Mississippi hackberry, Mississippi Sugarberry, Southern hackberry, Sugar hackberry

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Fruit, Seeds

The fruit are eaten raw. They are also used for desserts, sauces, jams and jellies. They can be used for wine. The seeds are also used as a food.

DESCRIPTION

A deciduous tree. It grows 25 m tall. It is a broad column shape. The bark is pale grey and smooth. It has corky lenticels. The leaves are narrowly oval and 10 cm long by 4 cm wide. They have 3 veins. The leaves taper at the tip. There can be a few teeth. The leaves are pale and smooth. The male and female flowers are both small and green. They occur either singly or in small clusters in the axils of leaves. They are separate but on the same plant. The fruit is round and berry-like. They are orange-red and 8 mm across. They are edible.

HABITAT

It is native to N. Mexico and S. United States. It grows on moist flood plains and in woods. It can grow with part shade or full sun. It can grow with a pH of 4-8. It can grow in most soils. It can tolerate soils poor in nutrients. It can tolerate short periods of waterlogging and even some salt water flooding. It is reasonably drought tolerant. It can grow in arid places. It is frost hardy. It grows best with a summer temperature of about 26°C. It can tolerate air pollution. It suits hardiness zones 6-11.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants can be grown from seed. Seed germinate best if they have cold treatment of 5°C for 2-3 months. Seeds should be planted into well composted soil but not overwatered. Plants can be grown from semi-hardwood cuttings. They need to be put into a well drained soil. They can also be grown by suckers.

Harvesting and Seed Production

It is reasonably fast growing. The first fruit are produced after 15 years. The fruit are best gathered after the first frost. They are harvested when fully ripe. Trees can live for 150 years.

NOTES

There are 70-100 Celtis species. They are mostly in the tropics. There are 8-10 species in tropical America. Also put in the family Ulmaceae.

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