

The mulberry tree

Years ago I saw a huge mulberry tree on a forecourt in Slovenia - the fruit had fallen to the ground and been trampled on. Ugly stains, like from blueberries or blackberries were on the light grey stone slabs. A second time I encountered the berries in a garden near Bologna - the large berries tasted pleasant. I was given a jar of jam. A third time was in France, behind Geneva on a motorway rest area. Four years ago, I planted two crooked little trees in my garden, between the fruit trees, so that they would be somewhat protected against the cold and snow in winter. I have already been able to harvest berries, fresh from the tree. The scientific name is *Morus nigra* L.



Unused Romanian postal stationery with additional franking (why?) from Timisoara (Temesvár).

The trees can grow to over 12 metres high, the flowers are either male or female, both sexes can occur on the same tree. The fruits ripen between July and September, depending on location and weather; they taste pleasant but not really sweet. The plant is rarely found in Central Europe because it likes warmth and is sensitive to cold or frost.

Especially in Chinese medicine, all parts of the mulberry are used: Injections alleviate elephantiasis and tetanus. Orally, the berries have analgesic, soothing and calming effects. The leaves are antibacterial, astringent, diaphoretic, hypoglycaemic, odontalgic and ophthalmic. The stems are antirheumatic, diuretic, antihypertensive and pectoral. A tincture from the bark is used against toothache. The fruit has a tonic effect on kidney energy, it is used in the treatment of urinary incontinence, tinnitus, premature greying of the hair and constipation in the elderly. The root bark is a cough suppressant, diuretic, expectorant and blood pressure reducer. It is used internally to treat asthma, cough, bronchitis, oedema, high blood pressure and diabetes.

Further reading: *Plants for a Future* - <https://pfaf.org>