

Tree Profile: Hackberry - *Celtis*

General: *Celtis*, commonly known as **hackberries** or **nettle trees**, is a genus of about 60 - 70 species of deciduous trees widespread in warm temperate regions. It is bearing shiny oval leaves, small green flowers in spring followed by small, sweet, edible bright orange fruits. Hackberry has a very fine twig structure similar to *Zelkova serrata*.

Lighting: Place in full sun, but protect from hot drying winds.

Temperature: It's very hardy, frost protection below -5°C.

Watering: Keep the soil moist, doesn't like wet soil.

Feeding: Feed weekly for a month after buds open and then every two or three weeks for the balance of spring/summer.

Repotting: Suggested every one to two years in well drained soil. Late winter to early spring is the best time.

Propagation: Easy from semi ripe cuttings in summer, seed or air-layering is another option.

Pruning and wiring: *Celtis* will grow a very fine ramification when regularly pruned. Trim back shoots to two or three leaves, responds well to repeated pruning and defoliation. Hard pruning and thinning out in late winter or early spring. Wiring from late spring to early autumn after leaves are full size but the branches still flexible!

Pests and diseases: Not especially susceptible to pests, though its leaves are less hardy than the Chinese Elm, making it a bit more inviting for leaf munchers.

Styles: Informal and formal upright, cascade and great for broom style. Suitable for single or multiple trunks in all sizes as well.

Some species suitable for Bonsai:

- ***Celtis australis* - European Hackberry:** A tall tree, native to southern Europe, North Africa and Asia Minor. The fruit is a small, dark purple, berry-like and sweet.
- ***Celtis sinensis* - Chinese Hackberry:** Similar to the *Zelkova serrata*, found across Japan, Korea, and northern China. It has orange fruit.
- ***Celtis africana* - White Stinkwood:** A tall tree in forests, a medium-sized tree in open country, and a shrub on rocky soil. The fruit is yellow or brown.
- ***Celtis occidentalis* - American Hackberry:** A large tree native to North America, it has large black or purple fruit.
- ***Celtis paniculata* - Native Hackberry:** A very tall coastal rainforest tree in Australia. The fruit is a round shaped stone fruit 8 to 10 mm long.

The pictures are courtesy of Walter Pall!

*His European Hackberry, *Celtis australis*, collected in Italy in 1995.*



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