

May 2013 *Guess that Plant*



Red Mulberry

***Morus rubra* L.**

The May *Guess that Plant* was one of our common early succession trees, red mulberry. The plant was chosen to help show the red versus white character of un-lobbed younger leaves. Unlike white mulberry, *Morus alba* L., red is an oval to ovate shaped leaf without basal lobbing on the younger leaves. On the contrary, white mulberry is commonly lobbed and shows a common trait some tree species express, having aged dimorphism expressed in leaf shape. Another common tree with this leaf characteristic is sassafras.

Red mulberry is a common species found along the shores of the Delaware River and tributaries, as well as the richer soils of Hunterdon, Mercer, Warren, Somerset and the undeveloped Hudson River edged counties of Essex, Union and Bergen. The habitat for red mulberry includes early succession habitats, farm field edges and rich floodplains. Don't be fooled by the name, the fruits on both species are colored. Red mulberry tends to be a rounder fruit and more reddish highlights whereas white mulberry is darker purple.

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