

SHAHTOOT

King White Non-Staining Mulberry

Shahtoot is a new multi-purpose tree for Australia. It's a popular hybrid species in Pakistan and the Middle East because it's an attractive fruiting tree which is easy to grow and maintain. The large non-staining fruit is very sweet and nutritious. At around 30% sugar when fully ripe, Shahtoot is much sweeter than the English black mulberry. Being white and essentially seedless avoids the messy staining associated with other mulberries. Fruiting occurs from October through to December, and commences the first season from planting.

GROWTH HABIT

Shahtoot is a vigorous growing deciduous tree to 10 metres. It forms a dense crown with pendulous branches and makes an attractive spreading shade tree, especially when "pinched out" to the desired shape.

The leaves are semi-lobed and vary from lime green on the new flush to dark green when mature. It's the branching nature of Shahtoot to grow 'out' rather than 'up' which sets it apart from other mulberries as an excellent garden specimen tree.

WHERE TO PLANT

Shahtoot is renowned for its hardiness. It withstands extremes of heat and cold, allowing it to thrive in Australia from the arid interior and tropical north through to the

cold temperate south of the continent. In Pakistan, it is cultivated to 3,050m (10,000 feet).

Shahtoot is grafted onto vigorous seeding rootstock, making it a deep rooted tree which grows rapidly given adequate moisture and nutrients (3.5m in 12 months). However, Shahtoot will also survive drought conditions making it an excellent shade tree for sheep and cattle yards where it can be topped for fodder. In fowl yards, chickens thrive on fallen fruit and benefit from the summer shade and winter sun that Shahtoot, being deciduous, provides. Shahtoot has excellent fire-retardant capabilities.

Most soils are suitable for Shahtoot including heavy clay types. This adaptability makes Shahtoot excellent as a street tree and suited to all sunny garden situations as well as 'problem' landscaping sites like hot courtyards or concreted carparks.

TREE CARE AND PRUNING

Shahtoot is easy to establish and maintain. No sprays are needed since there are no known pests or diseases which attack the leaves or fruit, other than fruit eating birds.

Shahtoot responds to applied water and nutrients with rapid growth yet survives minimum care conditions equally well.

To obtain maximum branching on young trees it is preferable to 'pinch out' the terminal growth tips between thumb and forefinger when branches reach 1/2 to 1m length. Shahtoot can be pruned during winter dormancy with each lateral cut by approximately half. This also facilitates branching and maintains Shahtoot to a manageable size.

USES

Fruit

Shahtoot fruit can be eaten at half green stage when they are crisp and semi-sweet, or left until fully ripe when they turn white in colour and obtain maximum sweetness. Fruit falls to the ground at the white stage, which is assisted by shaking the trees.

Shahtoot fruit is excellent eaten fresh, its sweetness provides an ideal contrast to other foods in salads and sambals or on a cheese platter. Shahtoot makes a novel garnish to many dishes. In Pakistan Shahtoot is often dried and used as a source of sugar.

Analysis (fresh weight)* Fructose 14%; Glucose 13.1%; Sucrose 1.1%; other carbohydrates 1.8%; Vitamin C 10mg/100gm. (* Australian Government Anal. Lab.)

Tree - other uses

Shahtoot leaves are unparalleled for rearing silkworms. Shahtoot wood is hard, suitable for turning and carving, especially for hockey sticks, cricket bats and stumps.

This information was produced from a Fact Sheet supplied by Gilbert's Wholesale Nursery, Pacific Highway, Moorland NSW 2443. Shahtoot Mulberry trees can be purchased from this nursery.

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