# SUGARBERRY

## *Celtis laevigata* Willd.

plant symbol = CELA

*Contributed by: USDA, NRCS, National Plant Data Center*

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**Alternate Names**
Texas sugarberry

**Uses**
*Ethnobotanic*: Sugarberry was used by a variety of Native American tribes. The Houma used a concentrate made from the bark to treat sore throats and a concentrate made from the bark and ground up shells to treat venereal disease. The Comanche would beat the fruits of sugarberry to a pulp. The pulp was then mixed with animal fat, rolled into balls, and roasted in the fire for food. The Acoma, Navajo, and Tewa all consumed the berries for food. The Navajo boiled the leaves and branches to make dark brown and red dye for wool.

**Status**
Please consult the PLANTS Web site and your State Department of Natural Resources for this plant's current status (e.g. threatened or endangered species, state noxious status, and wetland indicator values).

**Description**
*General*: Elm Family (Ulmaceae). Sugarberry is a tree that can become up to 30 m tall and 1m in diameter. It has a broad crown formed by spreading branches, that are often drooped. The bark is light gray in color and can be smooth or covered with corky warts. The branchlets are covered with short hairs at first and eventually they become smooth. The leaves are alternated, simple, and slightly serrate. The leaves are 5 to 13 cm long and 3 to 5 cm wide. The lance-shaped leaves gradually taper to a point that is often curved. They are pale green on both the upper and lower surfaces with conspicuous veins. The flowers appear just before, or with the leaves in the spring. The drupes are subspherical and 5 to 8 mm in diameter. They have a thick skin and the pit surface has a netlike pattern. The drupes range in color from orange to reddish-brown and are attached by pedicels that are 6 to 15 mm long.

*Distribution*: For current distribution, please consult the Plant Profile page for this species on the PLANTS Web site.

*Habitat*: Sugarberry is found growing in sandy loam or rocky soils along streams, in bottomlands, and in woodlands.

**Adaptation**
When sugarberry is top-killed by fire it will resprout from the root collar.

**Establishment**
Sugarberry can be propagated by seed and cuttings, planted in autumn. Sugarberry has no preference for a particular soil type.

**Pests and Potential Problems**
Grown in its native habitat and using local seed stock, sugarberry should not be prone to debilitating pests.

**Cultivars, Improved, and Selected Materials (and area of origin)**
These materials are readily available from commercial plant sources.

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