

Broussonetia papyrifera

[Synonyms : *Broussonetia secundiflora*, *Morus papyrifera*, *Papyrius papyrifera*, *Smithiodendron artocarpioideum*]

PAPER MULBERRY is a deciduous shrub or tree. Native from eastern Asia to Polynesia, it has greenish-purple catkins.

It is also known as *Amoreira do papel* (Portuguese), *Aute* (Maori), *Broussonetie papíronosná* (Czech), *Brusonécia papierová* (Slovak), *Brusonetio papera* (Esperanto), *Brussonetiia* (Russian), *Brussonetiia bumazhnoi* (Russian), *Bumazhnaia shelkovitsa* (Russian), *Bumazhnoi shelkovitzы* (Russian), *Dương* (Vietnamese), *Falso moro* (Italian), *Gelso da carta* (Italian), *Gelso papirifero* (Italian), *Gou shu* (Chinese), *Hiapo* (Tongan), *Kaji noki* (Japanese), *Kapa-fibre*, *Kku ji na mu* (Korean), *Kozo* (Spanish), *Kozo Japonés* (Spanish), *Malo* (Fijian), *Moral de la China* (Spanish), *Morera del papel* (Spanish), *Moro cinese* (Italian), *Moro da carta* (Italian), *Moro della cina* (Italian), *Moro papyrifero* (Italian), *Mûrier à papier* (French), *Mûrier de Chine* (French), *Papelero* (Spanish), *Papiermaulbeere* (German), *Papiermoerbei* (Dutch), *Papirjevka* (Slovenian), *Papirmorbær* (Danish), *Po 'a 'aha* (Hawaiian), *Po sa* (Thai), *Shelkovitsa bumazhnaia* (Russian), *Tapa-fibre*, *Tapacloth tree*, *Thai paper mulberry*, *U'a* (Samoan), and *Wauke* (Hawaiian).

The bark fibre is stripped in ribbons for processing to extract the fibre.

Papyrifera is derived from Greek *papyro-* (paper) and Latin *-fer* (bearing, carrying) components meaning 'paper-bearing or papery' with reference to the bark.

This tree has been cultivated for centuries (particularly on field edges) in China, Japan, as well as in Polynesia.

The Chinese began to develop a method of making paper from the inner bark (having observed, it is said, how wasps build their nests). In due time with the fibres from the inner bark of the paper mulberry they made a mixture with flax (*Linum*) and hemp (*Cannabis sativa*) – and a very high quality paper is still made from this bark today in Japan. Later on this process was to be enhanced by the Arabs.

It was the Chinese who introduced their paper-making process to the Indonesian island of Java. There the Javanese seemed to have viewed this material as bark cloth (as opposed to paper) initially at least, as authorities have noted that they used it to make clothing, especially nightwear.

The fibre has also been used to make rope.

When Captain James Cook (1728-1779) the English navigator, visited Tahiti he saw the inhabitants make material from its bark too. Tapa cloth, which can be dyed easily, is still produced today and the fibres are also used to make a kind of rope.

Believed to have been introduced to Hawaii by the Polynesians, the Islanders used the bark to make cloth by similar methods to those familiar to the Tahitians.

On the North American mainland some of the Apache Indian tribe wore necklaces of the seeds during some rituals.

Today authorities note that this bark fibre is used commercially to make paper, umbrellas and paper lanterns.