

Betula papyrifera

Native to Maine

White Birch
Paper Birch

Upland
Disturbed Areas and Forest Clearings













Leaves



Flickr user esagor



Look for leaves that are alternate, oval and pointed with lateral veins (veins that extend from the middle of the leaf to the edges). The base of the leaves is rounded or squared off and the edges of leaves are toothed.

LEAF ARRANGEMENT	LEAF TYPE	LEAF/LEAFLET SHAPE	LEAF/LEAFLET EDGE
 ALTERNATE	 SIMPLE	 PALMATE	 SMOOTH
 OPPOSITE	 COMPOUND-PALMATE	 OVAL	 TOOTHED
 WHORLED	 COMPOUND-PINNATE	 ROUND	 WAVY

Plant



Flickr user esagor



Paper birch is a single- or multi-stemmed, deciduous (loses its leaves in the fall) tree. In forests it has a narrow crown (top). In open areas it grows wider.

Stem



Flickr user cmoray1



The bark of saplings (young trees) is smooth and reddish-brown. On mature trees bark is thin, white, smooth, and separates into papery strips.

Seasonal Change



Flickr user withrow



Paper birch male catkins are partly formed in fall, remain over winter and grow to 10 cm long before flowering in spring. Leaves turn yellow in fall.

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Similar Species

The leaves, peeling bark, shape, and size of Yellow Birch and Paper Birch are similar. A major difference between the two is that the bark of a mature Paper Birch is white and mature Yellow Birch bark is shiny bronze to gray.

Fun Fact

White Birch bark has a high oil content that makes it waterproof. It was used for building and clothing by the American Indians. Paper Birch is also known as Canoe Birch because Native Americans used it for the covering of the birch bark canoe.