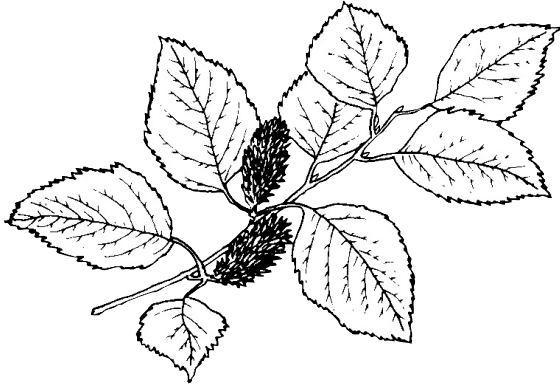


Leaf Identification



River Birch
(*Betula nigra*)

River birch is a large tree at maturity reaching 40'-70' in height with a 40'-60' spread. A short trunk usually divides into several arching branches that form a rounded crown. This birch can be grown as a single- or multi-stemmed tree. It has cinnamon-colored exfoliating bark and lustrous medium green leaves in summer, turning a soft yellow in the fall. A wide variety of birds and small mammals eat the seeds, and deer browse the foliage. Birch is a host plant for butterfly larvae. It provides nesting sites and cover.

River birch will tolerate a wide variety of site conditions, including sandy to clay, moist to wet, acidic soils, full sun to partial shade, heat, and periodic flooding. It prefers sandy, moist, acidic soil and full sun. Pruning can ensure a single-stem tree and establish a stronger structure to resist ice damage. Any pruning should be done during dormancy and not when the sap is flowing. This native birch grows at a medium to fast rate with a lifespan up to 75 years.