

# 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 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



Look for 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



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

## Seasonal Change



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Leaves turn yellow in fall. Male flowers (catkins) start to form in fall and grow to 8 cm by spring. Female flowers produce tiny (1.5 mm) winged nutlets.

## Similar Species

Use bark and leaf traits to identify birches. Mature Paper birch has white bark, Yellow birch bark is shiny bronze to gray, and Gray birch bark doesn't peel easily and has dark triangular patches at the base of branches. Gray birch leaves have longer points than those of White birch.

## 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.