



Project BudBurst

A National Phenology Network Field Campaign for Citizen Scientists



www.budburst.org

Common Name: Paper birch, Paperbark birch, Silver birch, Canoe birch)

Scientific Name: *Betula papyrifera*

Plant Family: Betulaceae

Identifying Characteristics:

Size: A medium sized tree that grows up to 21 m (70 ft) tall, often with several trunks

Leaves: Oval- or triangular-shaped, greener on the topside and paler on the underside.

Flowers: in long, yellowish clumps called catkins.

Bark: thin, smooth and dark on young stems, becoming bright creamy white with a peeling, papery texture.

Habitat: Grows best in well-drained soils with cold soil temperatures and ample moisture. This species grows best in full sunlight and is very shade intolerant.

Bloom time: Mid-spring

Information sources:
USDA Plants Database (plants.usda.gov/java/profile?symbol=BEPA)
Virginia Tech Forestry Department Dendrology Database (www.cnr.vt.edu/DENDRO/DENDROLOGY/syllabus/factsheet.cfm?ID=14)

Did you know? “The sap and inner bark is used as emergency food. White birch can be tapped in the spring to obtain sap from which beer, syrup, wine or vinegar is made. The inner bark can be dried and ground into a meal and used as a thickener in soups or added to flour used in making bread. A tea is made from the root bark and young leaves of white birch. It was also used by native Americans to make canoes, buckets, and baskets. ...North American Indian tribes used white birch to treat skin problems of various rashes; skin sores, and burns.”

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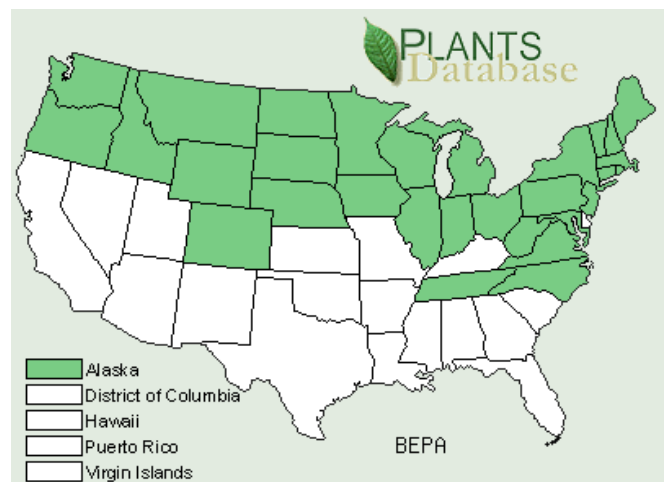
Photograph courtesy of USDA-NRCS PLANTS Database / Herman, D.E., et al. 1996. North Dakota tree handbook. USDA NRCS ND State Soil Conservation Committee; NDSU Extension and Western Area Power Admin., Bismarck, ND.



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Phenological observation:
Budburst/First Leaf, First Flower

Distribution Area:



Map courtesy of USDA-NRCS PLANTS Database (plants.usda.gov)