

FACT SHEET – Birch

Issue 7

Birch is the name of a certain tree of the genus *Betula* in the family *Betulaceae*, closely related to the beech/oak family, *Fagaceae*.



Description

Birch wood is fine-grained and pale in colour, often with an attractive satin-like sheen. They are generally small to medium-size trees or shrubs, mostly of temperate climates. The simple leaves may be toothed or pointed. The fruit is a small samara.

The bark of all birches is characteristically marked with long horizontal lenticels, and often separates into thin papery plates. It is practically imperishable, due to the resinous oil which it contains. Its decided colour gives the common names Red, White, Black, Silver and Yellow to different species. The leaves of the different species only vary slightly.

Ecology

Birches often form even-aged stands, on light, well-drained, particularly acidic soils. They are regarded as pioneer species, rapidly colonising open ground especially in secondary successional sequences following a disturbance or fire. Birches are generally lowland species the foliage is used as a food plant by butterflies and moths.

Uses

Timber - is suitable for veneer, and birch ply is among the strongest and most dimensionally-stable plywood's, although it is unsuitable for exterior use. Birch ply is also used to make furniture.

Leaves - make a diuretic tea and to make extracts for dyes and cosmetics.

Bark - can be soaked until moist in water, and then formed into a cast for a broken arm.

Many of the First Nations of North America prized the birch for its bark, which due to its light weight, flexibility, and the ease with which it could be stripped from fallen trees, was often used for the construction of strong, waterproof but lightweight canoes, bowls, and wigwams.

Birch paper is exceptionally durable and was the parchment used for many ancient Indian texts. This bark also has been used widely in ancient Russia as note paper.

STOCKS AVAILABLE:-

2" x 6" Only

Lengths

9fts & Longer