

River birch

Betula nigra, commonly known as the river birch, is a deciduous tree that belongs to the family Betulaceae. Native to the Northern America, it is widely distributed and can be found along riverbanks, streams, and other wetland areas. The river birch is known for its attractive peeling bark, graceful form, and tolerance to various soil conditions.

River birch trees are medium to large in size, typically reaching heights of 12 to 21 meters and spreading 12 to 18 meters in width. They have an open, pyramidal or rounded crown when young, which becomes more irregular with age.

The most distinctive feature of the river birch is its bark. The bark starts off as smooth and copper-colored when young but develops attractive peeling characteristics as it ages. The outer bark exfoliates in papery sheets, revealing cinnamon to reddish-brown inner bark, creating a beautiful and textured appearance.

One of the notable qualities of *Betula nigra* is its ability to tolerate wet and poorly drained soils, making it well-suited for riparian areas. It can also tolerate some drought conditions once established. It prefers full sun but can tolerate partial shade as well.

River birch trees provide habitat and food for various wildlife species. Birds feed on the seeds, while the dense foliage offers shelter and nesting sites. The tree also attracts butterflies and other pollinators.

Overall, the *Betula nigra*, or river birch, is an elegant and adaptable tree known for its striking bark, attractive form, and ability to thrive in wetland environments. It is a popular choice for landscaping in gardens, parks, and other natural areas.