

You are viewing one of thousands of biographies – click below for more, including Search box and access to Plant associated organisations.

[Plant Biographies](#)

[Bibliography](#)

---

### *Betula nigra*

[Synonyms : *Betula papyrifera*, *Betula rubra*]

**RIVER BIRCH** is a deciduous tree. Native to south-eastern North America it has leaves that turn yellow and brown in Autumn.

It is also known as *Betulo nigra* (Esperanto), Black birch, *Bříza černá* (Czech), *Fluss-Birke* (German), Red betula, Red birch, *Schwarz-Birke* (German), and Water birch.

The flowers are pollinated by the wind and the winged seeds are dispersed by wind or water. *Nigra* means 'black'.

One or two North American Indian tribes found medicinal attributes in the tree's leaves and bark. The latter was used by the Chippewa and the Cherokee Indians to treat some stomach problems. The Cherokee also used river birch in remedies for colds, various urinary ailments and dysentery.

The strong, light brown wood has been used locally for fuel. It has also been made into agricultural implements, inexpensive furniture, artificial limbs and toys, as well as being used for turning and for making shoes.

The tree itself has not only been grown as an ornamental or for shade but it has also been used to control soil erosion and reclaim areas which have been strip mined.

Deer will browse on the foliage and turkeys, grouse, small birds and rodents enjoy eating the seeds.