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Betula populifolia

[Synonyms : *Betula alba* var. *populifolia*]

GRAY BIRCH is a deciduous tree. Native to eastern North America it has leaves that turn light yellow in Autumn.

It is also known as Blue birch, Blueleaf birch, Broom birch, Fire birch, Grey birch, Old field birch, Pin birch, Poplar birch, Poplar-leaved birch, Poverty birch, Small white birch, Swamp birch, Water birch, White birch, and Wire birch.

Each branch bears distinctive dark triangular markings at its base.

Populifolia is made up of the genus name *Populus* and Latin *-folia* (leaved) components meaning ‘poplar-leaved (*Populus*)’.

The bark has provided medicine for several North American Indian tribes. It was used by the Iroquois for easing piles, and the Micmac and Malecite Indians applied inner bark to cuts. The Micmac also prescribed the inner bark to cause vomiting.

In Wisconsin in central North America the tree’s presence is recognized as an indicator of lead. The wood has been harvested for pulp but, locally especially, it has also been collected as a fuel and burnt for its charcoal. It has been used for cooperage, turning and making a range of small items such as clothes pegs and spools.

Gray birch has been cultivated as an ornamental tree.