

# Betula alleghaniensis



## yellow birch

Family	Betulaceae	
Origin	Native	
WIS Code	FAC	CoC 7



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### DESCRIPTION

This tree (to 30 m tall), with irregular crown and drooping branches, has shiny yellowish-brown or silver bark peeling in thin strips on older stems and trunk. Broken twigs have a slight wintergreen fragrance. Leaves are simple, alternate, elliptic to egg-shaped and pointed at the tip (3 to 10 cm long) with irregular double-toothed margins (fewer than six teeth per cm). Upper leaf surfaces are dark green and smooth, while lower surfaces are lighter green with tufted vein axils.

### FLOWERS AND FRUITS

April to May; June to August. Male and female reddish-green flowers clustered in cone-like spikes (catkins) appear in the spring. Male catkins are slightly drooping and cylindrical, and female catkins are stout, erect and egg-shaped. Fruits are two-winged seeds (samaras) protected by “bird-foot” like scales of the persistent fruiting cone.

### HABITAT

Cove forests, spruce and fir forests, and stream banks at higher elevations.

### SIMILAR SPECIES

*Betula lenta*, sweet birch, has dark brown bark (not peeling), twigs with strong wintergreen odor and leaf margins regularly, finely toothed (more than six teeth per cm). *Betula nigra*, river birch, also is similar but has tan to reddish-brown peeling bark, diamond-shaped leaves and no fragrance to broken twigs.



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*Betula alleghaniensis*



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*Betula lenta*



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*Betula nigra*