PLANT FACT SHEET

Betula pubescens Ehrh.

GENUS *Betula* **FAMILY** Betulaceae

COMMON NAMES White birch, Brown Birch, Downy birch, Hairy birch

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Flowers, Leaves, Sap

The sap is rich in sugar. It can be tapped in spring and made into birch wine by adding honey.
The buds are used as flavouring in drinks.
The leaves are sued for tea.

DESCRIPTION

A tree which loses its leaves during the year. It grows to 24 m high. It spreads 9 m wide. The bark is cream brown. There is fine down on the young twigs. The branches are twisting and do not hang down. The crown is rounded. The leaves are triangular shaped and have an irregular edge. They are 6 cm long and 5 cm across. The leaf stalk is slender and hairy. The female catkins are smaller and more erect than the male catkins. The male catkins are 6 cm long and yellow.

HABITAT

It is a temperate plant. It can tolerate more poorly drained soil. It grows in wetter soils and damp uplands. It is frost resistant. It is damaged by drought. Hobart Botanical Gardens. It suits hardiness zones 2-9. Arboretum Tasmania.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants are grown from seed. Seed germinate easily.

NOTES

There are about 60 Betula species. They grow in cool north temperate climates.

REFERENCES

Abbet, C., et al, 2014, Ethnobotanical survey on wild alpine food plants in Lower and Central Valais (Switzerland). Journal of Ethnopharmacology 151 (2014) 624–634

Beitr. Naturk. 6:98. 1791

Bircher, A. G. & Bircher, W. H., 2000, Encyclopedia of Fruit Trees and Edible Flowering Plants in Egypt and the Subtropics. AUC Press. p 59

Bodkin, F., 1991, Encyclopedia Botanica. Cornstalk publishing, p 146

Brown, D., 2002, The Royal Horticultural Society encyclopedia of Herbs and their uses. DK Books. p 143

Coombes, A.J., 2000, Trees. Dorling Kindersley Handbooks. p 124

Cundall, P., (ed.), 2004, Gardening Australia: flora: the gardener's bible. ABC Books. p 237

Etherington, K., & Imwold, D., (Eds), 2001, Botanica's Trees & Shrubs. The illustrated A-Z of over 8500 trees and shrubs. Random House, Australia. p 132

Girard, N. J., 2020, Sustainable Foraging of Wild Edible Plants in Norway. A Bioculutral Approach. M. Sc. thesis Norwegian University. p 37

Grandtner, M. M., 2008, World Dictionary of Trees. Wood and Forest Science Department. Laval University, Quebec, Qc Canada. (Internet database http://www.WDT.QC.ca)

Harris, E & J., 1983, Field Guide to the Trees and Shrubs of Britain. Reader's Digest. p 29

Kermath, B. M., et al, 2018, Food Plants in the Americas: A survey of the domesticated, cultivated and wild plants used for Human food in North, Central and South America and the Caribbean. p 166

Lord, E.E., & Willis, J.H., 1999, Shrubs and Trees for Australian gardens. Lothian. p 48

Lyle, S., 2006, Discovering fruit and nuts. Land Links. p 93

Morley, B. & Everard, B., 1970, Wild Flowers of the World. Ebury press. Plate 12

Plants for a Future database, The Field, Penpol, Lostwithiel, Cornwall, PL22 0NG, UK. http://www.scs.leeds.ac.uk/pfaf/

Prakofjewa, J., et al, 2023, Boundaries Are Blurred: Wild Food Plant Knowledge Circulation across the Polish-Lithuanian-Belarusian Borderland. Biology 2023, 12, 571.

Pruse, B., et al, 2021, Active Wild Food Practices among Culturally Diverse Groups in the 21st Century across Latgale, Latvia. Biology 2021, 10, 551.

Schuler, S., (Ed.), 1977, Simon & Schuster's Guide to Trees. Simon & Schuster. No. 85

Shikov, A. N. et al, 2017, Traditional and Current Food Use of Wild Plants Listed in the Russian Pharmacopoeia. Frontiers in Pharmacology. Vol. 8 Article 841

Svanberg, I. et al, 2012, Uses of tree saps in northern and eastern parts of Europe. Acta Societatis Botanicorum Poloniae 81 (4): 343-357

Whitney, C. W., et al, 2012, A Survey of Wild Collection and Cultivation of Indigenous Species in Iceland. Human Ecology 40:781-787

Young, J., (Ed.), 2001, Botanica's Pocket Trees and Shrubs. Random House. p 140

PROVIDED BY **Food Plants International**

French, B.R. & Maynard, A.R. Food Plants International Database. Food Plants International

LICENCE CC BY-NC-SA 3.0

ONLINE FACT SHEET https://www.echocommunity.org/en/resources/b0697069-aa28-4c9d-a452-13d3960efc21