

Silver Birch *Betula pendula*



Silver Birch grow quickly to around 30 metres tall. Branches angle upwards then arch gracefully.

Interesting facts: The silvery-white papery bark sheds layers like tissue paper.

Birch twigs are used to make besom brooms, better known as witches brooms.

The Silver Birch or 'Lady of the Woods' is an airy and elegant tree, with distinctive white bark. As the tree matures the bark develops pale grey horizontal fissures.



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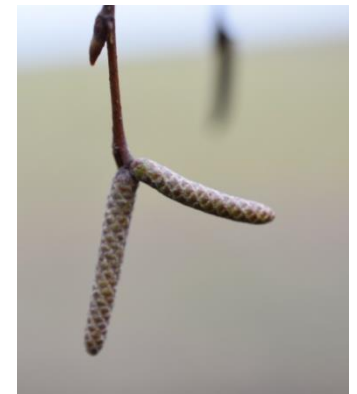


Silver birch have both male and female catkins which appear on the same tree in April and May. Female catkins are pollinated when the wind blows pollen onto them from the male catkins. They thicken and turn red-brown. In the autumn they disintegrate to produce masses of tiny winged seeds which are dispersed by the wind.



Female catkins are erect, around 3cm long and green in colour.

Male catkins can be up to 5cm long, yellow brown and drooping, hanging from the end of the branches.



Male catkins are un-stalked. They start developing in the previous summer.



Female catkins are stalked.

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Silver birch leaves are triangular or diamond shaped, with a toothed edge. They are a soft green in spring turning a rich yellow-gold in autumn.



Twigs are smooth with small dark warts.



Silver birch is very attractive to many insects. Its leaves attract aphids which provide food for ladybirds.

