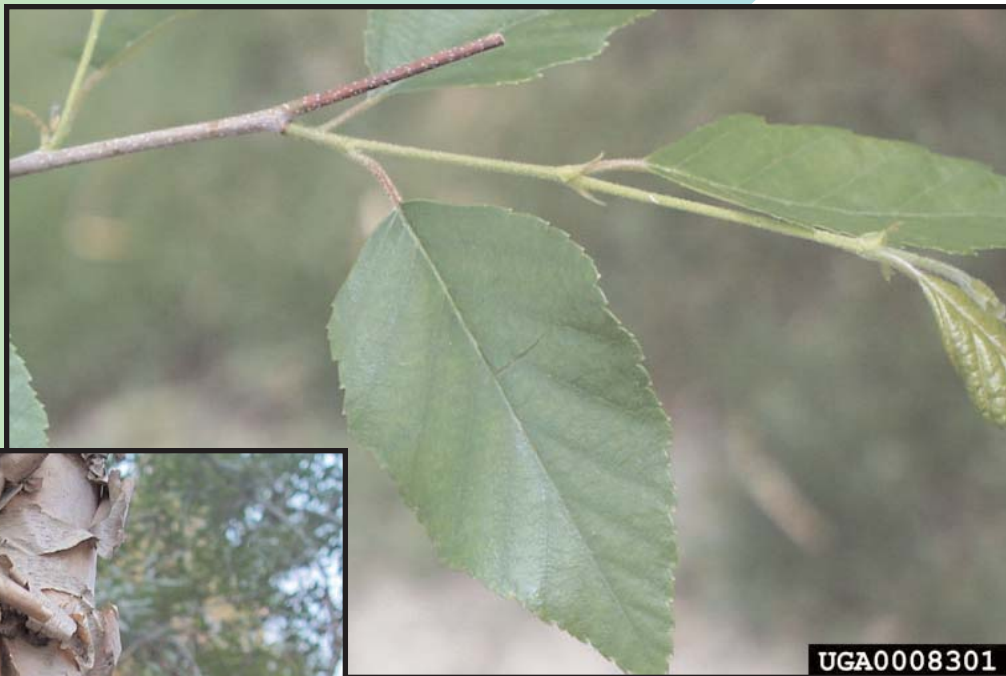


# River Birch



GARDEN EARTH  
NATURALIST  
ECO-SERVICE CARDS

# RIVER BIRCH

*Betula nigra* L.

FAMILY: Betulaceae

## IDENTIFICATION CLUES



**SIZE:** medium tree 70-80 feet tall, sometimes multi-trunked



**LEAF:** simple with toothed edge and alternate on stem; 1-3 inches long; deciduous



**FLOWER:** separate male and female flowers; tiny and occur in catkins which are 1/2 inch (female) to 1 1/2 inches long (male).



**FRUIT:** shaped like a 1 inch cone filled with small winged nutlets



**BARK:** light gray to brown with thin peeling, papery layers



## Where to Look

River birch is common along streams and rivers in the Piedmont and foothills and less common near the coast.

## Importance to Humans

The wood of river birch is used for furniture and cabinets. It is also used in the home landscape as it is a fast-growing tree. In the past the wood was used for artificial limbs.

## Importance to Wildlife

The seeds of river birch are sometimes eaten by birds and the leaves are browsed by deer.