

# Silver birch

## About silver birch

Birch grows up to 30m tall and can live a couple of hundred years. Birch woodlands have a light, open canopy that allows plants to grow underneath, including grasses, wood anemones, bluebells, wood sorrel and mosses to grow. Silver birch provides food and habitat for around 300 insect species and the leaves attract aphids that are eaten by ladybirds. A number of moth species are also supported by silver birch and birds such as woodpeckers often nest in the trunk. Birch trees are also particularly associated with a number of fungi, including fly agaric, woolly and birch milk caps, chanterelle and the birch polypore.

Birch wood is suitable for furniture making, handles and toys and was used to make bobbins, spools and reels for the cotton industry. The bark can be used in tanning leather and in firelighting. Birch can also be used to make besom brooms.



# Identifying silver birch

**#1 Location** - usually grows in woods, heaths and the edge of bogs. It is a pioneer tree – one of the first trees to grow on disturbed land or unmanaged grassland.



Autumn leaf

**#2 Bark** - distinctive silvery grey bark that is quite papery and peels, becomes deeply fissured on older trees

**#3 Buds** - buds are small, shiny and grow alternately along the delicate 'warty' twig.



Buds



Twigs

## Where to find silver birch trees in Torfaen

Silver birch is a common tree throughout Torfaen and you will find some at the following locations:  
The British; Garn Lakes; Herberts Wood, Pontypool

Young bark



Mature bark

