SPRING BIRCH
Betula occidentalis

GRAY BIRCH
Betula populifolia

FAMILY: Betulaceae

GENUS: Betula

SPECIES:	occidentalis	populifolia
COMMON NAMES:	Spring Birch Black Birch	Gray Birch, White Birch, American White Birch, Poplar-leaved Birch
POLLEN GRAIN:	Flattened and angular, 20-28 microns in diameter. Germ pores 3.	
POLLINATING PERIOD:	March to May	April and May
DISTRIBUTION:	British Columbia and eastern Washington to the Black Hills of South Dakota, southward along the Rocky Mountains to northern New Mexico. Northern California and the east slope of the Sierra Nevada.	Nova Scotia to Delaware and westward to Minnesota and Ontario. Most abundant in coastal states.

ALLERGIC IMPORTANCE: **Moderately important where prevalent.**

Spring Birch grows to 25 ft. (50 ft. for variety Piperi found in eastern Washington) with a short trunk and ascending, spreading, and somewhat pendulous branches, forming a broad open crown. The leaves are acutely pointed with a rounded base. Leaf margins are sharply toothed. Mature leaves are dull dark green above and pale yellow green below. The bark is a lustrous dark bronze and doesn't separate into thin layers. The staminate catkins are clustered; the pistillate usually solitary.

Gray Birch is a shortlived tree rarely over 30 ft. tall. The leaves are nearly triangular in outline, coarsely double toothed, and a lustrous dark green color. The bark is dull white on the outer surface and bright orange on the inner, and doesn't separate into thin layers. Male and female catkins occur singly. The branches are slender, often drooping, and usually clothe the trunk to the ground to form a narrow, pyramidal crown.

The staminate catkins of all birches are formed in the late summer or fall and remain naked and erect on the bare twigs through the winter. With spring they increase in size rapidly and become pendulous prior to pollination.



Betula occidentalis
(Spring Birch) Bottom Illustration

Betula populifolia
(Gray Birch) Top Illustration