

White Birch

Betula papyrifera

Height: 15-20 meters

Diameter: 30-60 centimetres

Distinguishing feature: White bark peels in papery strips

USES

Historical- Many northern aboriginal groups consider it the most useful of all trees. Birch bark was used for making baskets, boxes, tubs, baby cradles, platters, bead pans, cups and other containers. The bark also lined canoes, teepees and was used to make documents for medicine men.

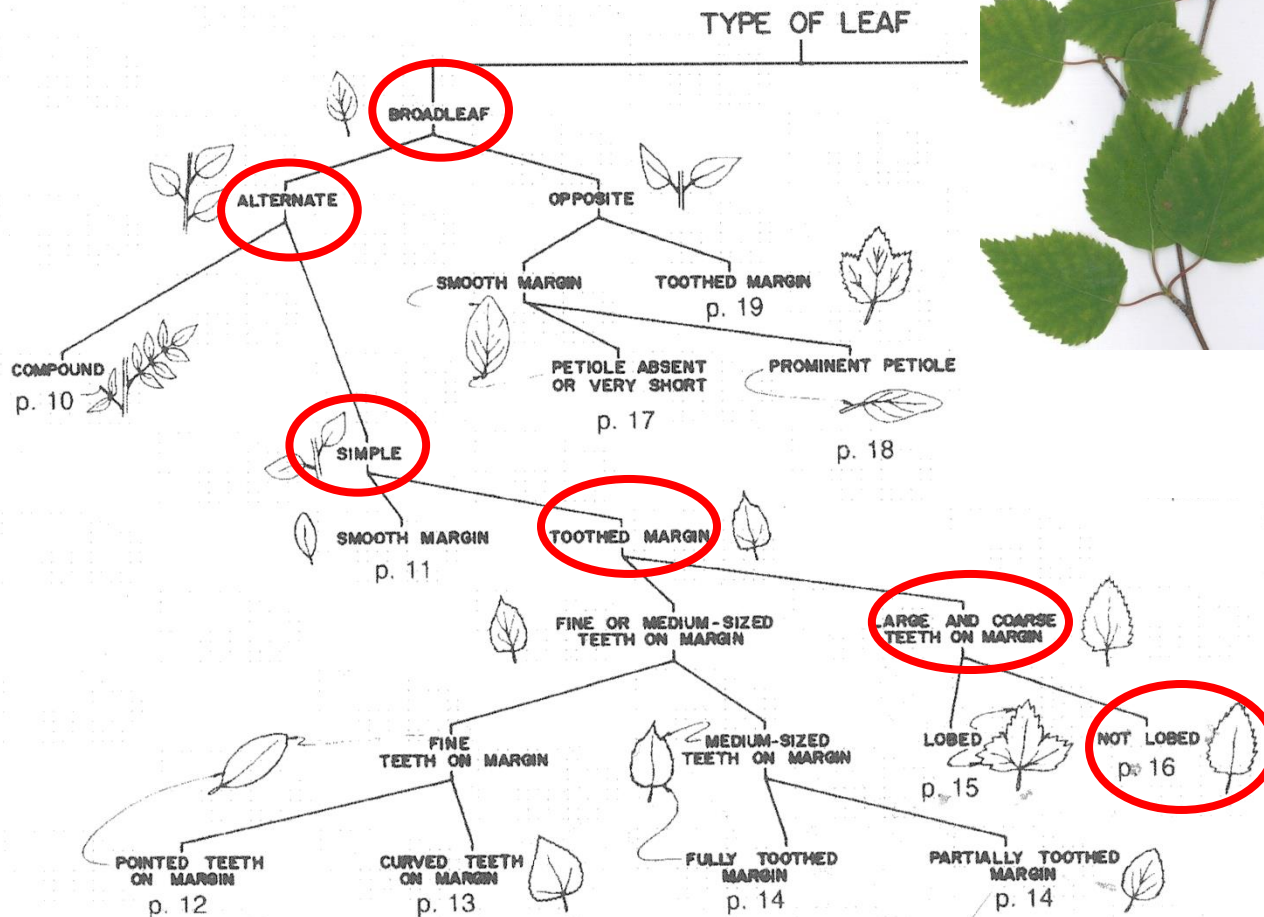
Commercial- Products include plywood, veneer, furniture making, firewood, ice cream sticks, toothpicks, bobbins, clothespins, spools, broom handles, sleds, snowshoes and toys.

Natural - Birch bark is a natural fire starter. Birch bark should be taken from a fallen log because stripping the bark from a live tree can injure the tree or leave permanent scars.

Medicinal- Leaves can be chewed and applied to wasp stings to draw out poison. The thin, papery outer bark was used to bandage burns and heavier bark was used for casts and slings.



Identification



Guide to the
Common Native
Trees and Shrubs
of Alberta



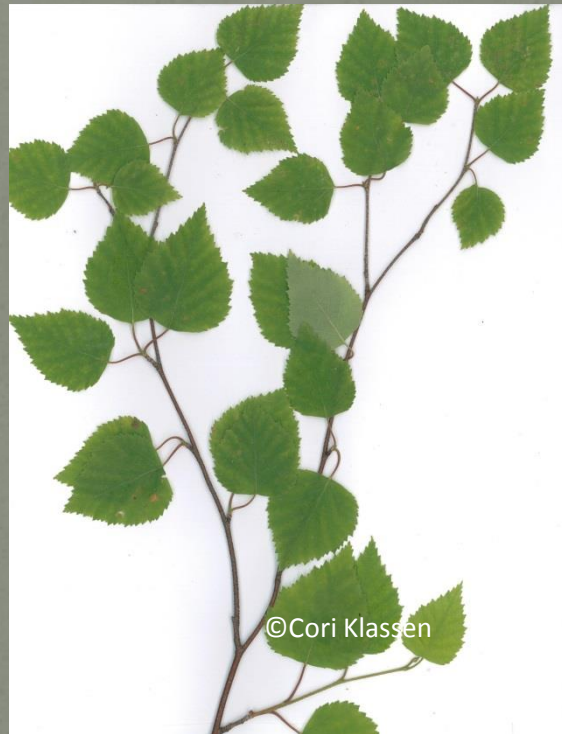
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SOCIETY

White Birch

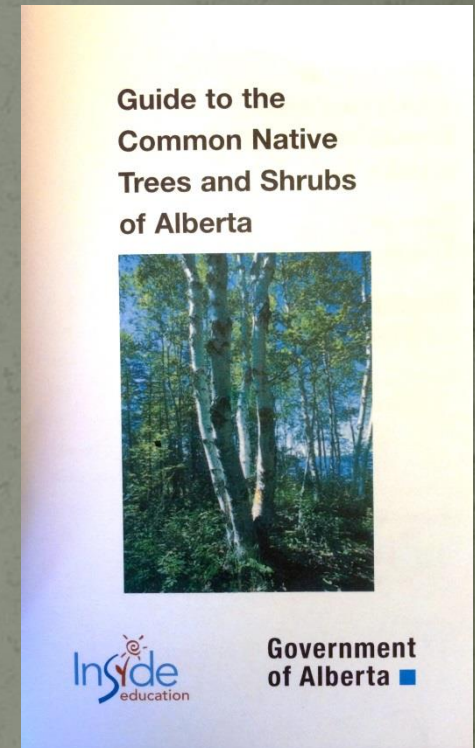
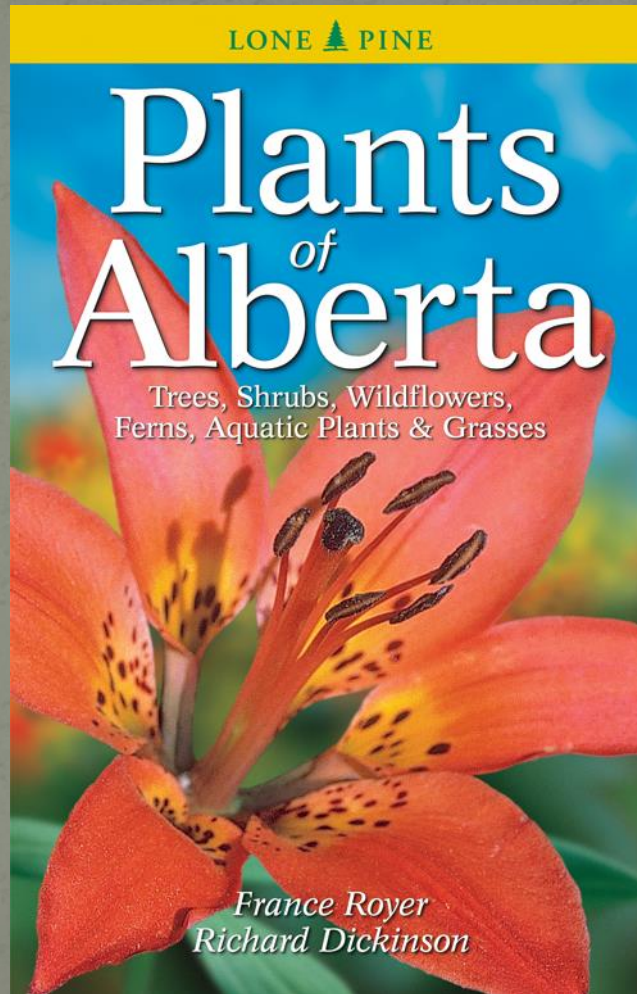
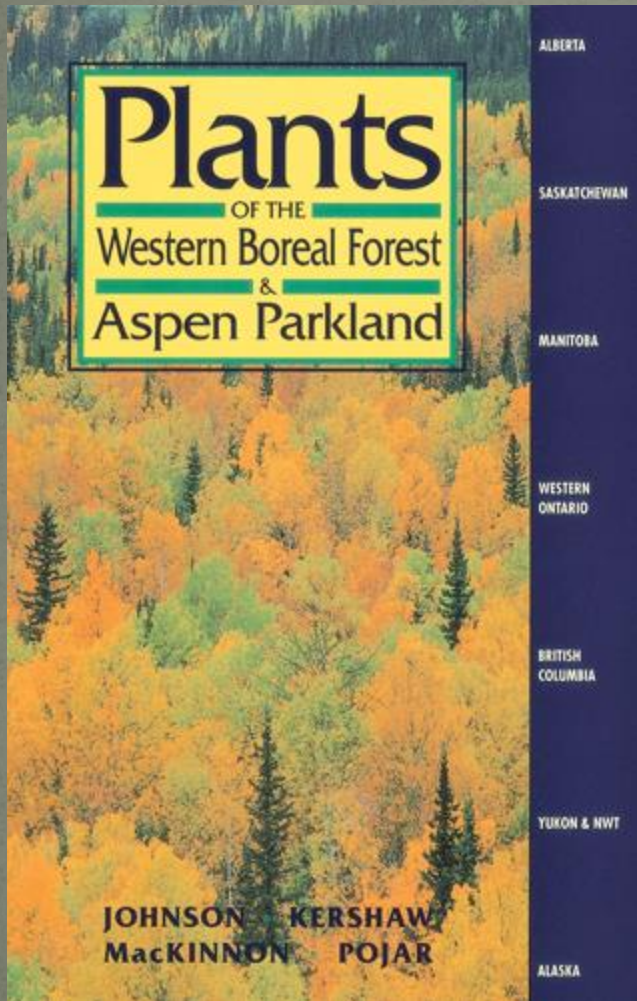
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Leaves are ovate with large, coarse teeth on the margin



Resources



<http://www.insideeducation.ca>

