



MOUNTAIN PAPER BIRCH

Betula cordifolia Regel.

Mountain paper birch is closely related to paper birch, and has been designated as a variety of the species by some authors (*Betula papyrifera* var. *cordifolia* (Regel) Fern.). It is known at many points in Maine, particularly on mountain slopes, coastal headlands and islands east of Mount Desert Island. It often grows as a clump of several stems. It can grow to about 60 feet in height and 1 foot or more in diameter.

The **bark** of young trees and branches is dark reddish-brown and does not peel. The bark of older trees will separate into thin, papery layers. In mature trees, bark color ranges from whitish with a pinkish or salmon-colored tinge to reddish-brown or bronze.

The **leaves** are egg-shaped with heart-shaped bases, abruptly pointed, and coarsely doubly-toothed. The flowers are borne in catkins. Dormant male catkins in clusters of 2–4 are visible during winter. Both male and female catkins expand in spring.

The **fruit** is a tiny nutlet with 2 small lateral wings. It matures in fall and is dispersed during the fall and winter. Large numbers of birch seed can often be seen on the surface of the snow.

The **wood** is similar to that of paper birch; and the two species are usually not separated. It is used for turnery products, cabinetry, pulp and fuel.

Mountain paper birch is most often found along the coast and at high elevations.

