

Silver birch seeds

The Good Seed Guide
by The Tree Council

The white-barked silver birch prefers drier conditions than downy birch, and is most widespread in the south and east of Britain, on light dry soils. It grows on heathlands, woodlands and is often planted in gardens and parks. A mature birch can produce up to one million seeds.

The strong white wood was used for bobbins, flooring and schoolmasters' canes. The bark was used for paper, shoes and roofing. Current uses include parquet floors, backing for veneers, furniture and broom handles.

Birch has a high conservation value as it provides food and shelter for a wide range of birds including redpolls and siskins. Up to 334 invertebrate species have been recorded in birches.

Seed Guide:

Birch cones can be collected from the lower branches of trees. Place

the cones in a paper bag and allow them to dry at room temperature. Ripe cones will disintegrate on drying leaving a mixture of tiny winged seeds plus fleur-de-lys shaped bracts. Don't bother trying to separate them! The tiny seeds can be sown immediately and should be covered by a thin layer of sharp sand and left over winter until they germinate the following spring.

Easily confused with:
Downy Birch



The triangular leaves are on slender hairless stalks. The leaf base is at right angles to the stalks. The fruiting catkins stay on the tree until winter.



Large tree (8:15:30)

