

River Birch

(*Betula nigra*)



Phenophase Definitions

Directions:

As you report on phenophase status (Y, N or ?) on the datasheets, refer to the definitions on this sheet to find out what you should look for, for each phenophase in each species. To report the intensity of the phenophase, choose the best answer to the question below the phenophase, if one is included. Feel free not to report on phenophases or intensity questions that seem too difficult or time-consuming.

Leaves

Breaking leaf buds

One or more breaking leaf buds are visible on the plant. A leaf bud is considered "breaking" once a green leaf tip is visible at the end of the bud, but before the first leaf from the bud has unfolded to expose the leaf stalk (petiole) or leaf base.

How many buds are breaking?

Less than 3; 3 to 10; 11 to 100; 101 to 1,000; 1,001 to 10,000; More than 10,000;

Leaves

One or more live, unfolded leaves are visible on the plant. A leaf is considered "unfolded" once its entire length has emerged from a breaking bud, stem node or growing stem tip, so that the leaf stalk (petiole) or leaf base is visible at its point of attachment to the stem. Do not include fully dried or dead leaves.

What percentage of the potential canopy space is full with leaves? Ignore dead branches in your estimate of potential canopy space.

Less than 5%; 5-24%; 25-49%; 50-74%; 75-94%; 95% or more;

Increasing leaf size

A majority of leaves on the plant have not yet reached their full size and are still growing larger. Do not include new leaves that continue to emerge at the ends of elongating stems throughout the growing season.

What percentage of full size are most leaves?

Less than 25%; 25-49%; 50-74%; 75-94%; 95% or more;

Colored leaves

One or more leaves show some of their typical late-season color, or yellow or brown due to drought or other stresses. Do not include small spots of color due to minor leaf damage, or dieback on branches that have broken. Do not include fully dried or dead leaves that remain on the plant.

What percentage of the potential canopy space is full with non-green leaf color? Ignore dead branches in your estimate of potential canopy space.

Less than 5%; 5-24%; 25-49%; 50-74%; 75-94%; 95% or more;

Falling leaves

One or more leaves are falling or have recently fallen from the plant.

Flowers

Flowers or flower buds

One or more fresh open or unopened flowers or flower buds are visible on the plant. Include flower buds or inflorescences that are swelling or expanding, but do not include those that are tightly closed and not actively growing (dormant). Also do not include wilted or dried flowers. For *Betula nigra*, the male inflorescence is a catkin which is initially compact and stiff, but eventually unfolds to become longer and hang loosely from the branch. The female inflorescence is also a catkin which has leafy scales and remains erect. Once the female flowers wilt, the green catkin grows thicker as the fruits develop.

How many flowers and flower buds are present? For species in which individual flowers are clustered in flower heads, spikes or catkins (inflorescences), simply estimate the number of flower heads, spikes or catkins and not the number of individual flowers.

Less than 3; 3 to 10; 11 to 100; 101 to 1,000; 1,001 to 10,000; More than 10,000;

Open flowers

One or more open, fresh flowers are visible on the plant. Flowers are considered "open" when the reproductive parts (male stamens or female pistils) are visible between or within unfolded or open flower parts (petals, floral tubes or sepals). Do not include wilted or dried flowers. For *Betula nigra*, the male flowers will open once the initially compact catkin has unfolded and is hanging loosely. Female flowers are open when the pistils are visible, but will be very difficult to see where they are out of reach.

What percentage of all fresh flowers (buds plus unopened plus open) on the plant are open? For species in which individual flowers are clustered in flower heads, spikes or catkins (inflorescences), estimate the percentage of all individual flowers that are open.

Less than 5%; 5-24%; 25-49%; 50-74%; 75-94%; 95% or more;

Pollen release

One or more flowers on the plant release visible pollen grains when gently shaken or blown into your palm or onto a dark surface.

How much pollen is released?

Little: Only a few grains are released.;Some: Many grains are released.;Lots: A layer of pollen covers your palm, or a cloud of pollen can be seen in the air when the wind blows ;

Fruits

Fruits

One or more fruits are visible on the plant. For *Betula nigra*, the fruit is a very tiny, winged nutlet that ripens to tan or light brown and is hidden within a cone-like catkin that changes from green to dark brown and opens its bracts to expose the nutlets. Do not include empty catkins that have already dropped all of their nutlets.

How many fruits are present?

Less than 3; 3 to 10; 11 to 100; 101 to 1,000; 1,001 to 10,000; More than 10,000;

Ripe fruits

One or more ripe fruits are visible on the plant. For *Betula nigra*, a fruit is considered ripe when it has turned tan or light brown and readily drops from the dark brown catkin when touched. Do not include empty catkins that have already dropped all of their nutlets.

What percentage of all fruits (unripe plus ripe) on the plant are ripe?

Less than 5%; 5-24%; 25-49%; 50-74%; 75-94%; 95% or more;

Recent fruit or seed drop

One or more mature fruits or seeds have dropped or been removed from the plant since your last visit. Do not include obviously immature fruits that have dropped before ripening, such as in a heavy rain or wind, or empty fruits that had long ago dropped all of their seeds but remained on the plant.

How many mature fruits have dropped seeds or have completely dropped or been removed from the plant since your last visit?

Less than 3; 3 to 10; 11 to 100; 101 to 1,000; 1,001 to 10,000; More than 10,000;