

The **twigs** are usually hairy, and unlike yellow birch, without a wintergreen taste. The buds are slightly sticky.

The **wood** is close-grained, moderately hard, and strong. It is used for clothespins, woodenware, flatware, turned products, including spools, toys, toothpicks, dowels, furniture parts, paper-roll plugs; plywood, and for pulp.

This is one of the most valuable tree species in Maine. The tree gets the name of "paper birch" because of the use to which the bark was put by the early settlers, and that of "canoe birch" because the bark was used to make canoes. Paper birch sap in the early spring contains considerable sugar.

## **HYBRID BIRCHES**

It is known that natural hybrids often occur between certain closely related species of birches, especially between gray and mountain paper birch. The offspring are often intermediate between the parents, or in some cases, resemble one parent much more than the other. In such hybrids, it would require the experience of a specialist in order to determine the exact parentage.

### **Minor Species or Varieties of Birch in Maine:**

**Mountain Paper Birch** (*B. cordifolia* Regal) is known from many points in Maine, particularly on mountain slopes and coastal headlands and islands east of Mount Desert Island. The leaves are heart-shaped, abruptly pointed, coarsely doubly serrate. The bark separates into thin layers and is reddish-brown or white.

**Dwarf Paper Birch** (*B. minor* (Tuckerm.) Fern.) is found near the summit of Mt. Katahdin.

**Blueleaf Birch** (*B. x caerulea* Blanchard) is widely distributed on exposed mountain slopes. Leaves are dull bluish-green above doubly serrate, ovate, long-pointed. Trees reach a considerable height.

**Dwarf Birch** (*B. glandulosa* Michx.) is a dwarf species found on Mt. Katahdin.

**Low or Swamp Birch** (*B. pumila* L.) is another dwarf species. Found infrequently through the central part of the state in open bogs.