

Moor or downy birch and mountain birch tree

The moor birch is smaller than the silver birch. It grows as bouquets, with several stems from one root. The twigs are downy. "*Betula pubescens*", the Latin name, means precisely "birch with hair". The leaves are widest in the middle and have only simple teeth on the edge.

The moor birch often has nodules, twists, on the trunk. No one really knows how they are formed, but they are strong and good for making vessels.

The moor birch thrives best on moist soils from the coast all the way up to the edge of the mountains. There it turns into a subspecies - mountain birch - "*Betula pubescens* ssp. *tortuosa*" in Latin. It means "the twisted subspecies of the birch with hair".

The mountain birch is lower and gnarlier than the moor birch, and has twisted trunks and branches. Moor birch and mountain birch have helped us survive in cold regions. Wood and birch-bark for fires, wood for skis, sleds, and poles. *Vrilar* (birch burl) for bowls and cups. Roots for baskets and birch bark for the pine floor. Birch-bark was also used to cover houses and huts with. Ash to make soap from. The birch has provided all this.

In winter, the willow grouse eat mountain birch and moor birch. They walk on the ground and chew on the thin twigs. A grouse can eat 25 meters of birch twig on a cold winter's day. Sometimes they sit perched in the mountain birches like big snowballs.

Moose and reindeer like to eat birch leaves in the summer. In the past, the settlers dried birch twigs for winter food for cows, goats and sheep. Reindeer herders still dry birch bark for reindeer feed.