Native Plant of the Month

Paper Birch
Betula papyrifera

- Paper birch is named for the paper thin layers that peel away from its white bark. These thin layers have been used historically as writing parchment. Its scientific name simply repeats the common name in Latin.
- The catkins are a major food source for several species of birds. It is common to observe flocks of pine siskins moving quickly through the canopy as they feed in winter.
- The layers of bark have traditionally been used by tribes throughout North America for making containers, canoes, and other useful objects.

Landscape Value

Paper birch is a common and useful deciduous landscape tree which makes a striking show in clumps, woodlands or tight places. This plant will fit neatly in narrow sidewalk strips or near buildings, where it will tolerate pruning if needed.

The striking white bark, attractive foliage, yellow fall color, and decorative catkins in winter make this a plant with year-round landscape interest.

Plant in a sunny spot in the company of red osier dogwood, red flowering currant, mock orange, oceanspray, serviceberry, Oregon grape, wax myrtle, deer fern, bleeding heart, and woodland strawberry.

Text by Heidi Bohan
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