

Red River Birch

(*Quercus rubra*)

Genus/Species: Betula nigra

Family: Betulaceae

Distribution: Southeastern United States; East Texas northward to Missouri; Missouri eastward to Maryland; Maryland southward to North Florida; North Florida westward to East Texas; Northward along Upper Mississippi Valley to Southeast Minnesota; Northward along Atlantic Coast to Southeastern New York and South New Hampshire; Mostly absent from Appalachian Mountain systems and Lower Mississippi Valley.

This is the only birch native to lowland areas of the southeastern US, and it is typically found in wet areas such as floodplains of rivers and streams. It is a medium-sized tree often cultivated as an ornamental because of its shaggy, brownish papery bark that peels in layers. The male catkins, which soon release their wind-blown pollen, can be seen hanging in the early spring just as the leaves are beginning to develop while the female “cones” develop later, then disintegrate to release their seeds.

