

BETULA PUMILA L.  
Swamp Birch

FAMILY: Betulaceae (Corylaceae).

HABIT: Erect deciduous shrub, 0.5-3 m.; flowering mid-June; fruiting July, August.

SIMILAR SPECIES: *Betula pumila* is vaguely similar to alders, *Alnus rugosa* or *Alnus serrulata*, and is found in the same habitat. The leaves of *Betula pumila* are smaller (2-3 cm.) than the leaves of the alders (3. 5-12 cm.).

TOTAL RANGE: Nfld., N.S., Que., Ont., s. to ME, CT, NJ, MD, OH, MI, and WI.

STATE RANGE: Post-1980 records are known from Champaign, Logan, Portage, Seneca, Summit and Williams counties. There are pre-1980 records from Stark and Wyandot counties. A questionable record exists from Hamilton County.

HABITAT: Generally wet, neutral to calcareous soils in the shrubby margins of bogs and wooded swamps.

HAZARDS: Alteration of water supply; overshadowing by other woody species as a result of succession.

RECOVERY POTENTIAL: Unknown, possibly poor due to its limited habitat.

INVENTORY GUIDELINES: Vegetative material can be identified but flowering or fruiting material is preferred.

COMMENTS: *Betula pumila* forms dense colonies at the margins of fens and neutral bogs. When in suitable habitats, the entire wetland should be surveyed for this plant. *Betula pumila* hybridizes with several other species of birches. The only such hybrid reported from Ohio is *B. X purpusii* Schneid. (*B. allegheniensis* Britton X *B. pumila*) (Braun, 1961). This as well as other birch hybrids may occur with the parents in Ohio.

Some authors split *B. pumila* into four varieties. Under this concept, Ohio plants are the typical variety. The other varieties occur mainly to the north of Ohio. However, most recent authors treat it as a single variable entity and it is treated as such here.

SELECTED REFERENCES:

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