

# Betula pendula

## COMMON NAMES

Silver birch

## BIOSTATUS

Exotic

## CONSERVATION STATUS

Not applicable

## CATEGORY

Vascular

## STRUCTURAL CLASS

Trees & Shrubs - Dicotyledons

## FLOWER COLOURS

Green

## DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Tree with semi-drooping habit to about 25 m. Bark smooth at first, silvery white and peppery, becoming dark grey and rough. Deltoid leaves to about 6 cm long with 5-7 pairs of veins and serrate margins. Male catkins up to 9 cm long; female catkins to about 2.5 cm, papery when ripe and separate into large numbers of winged seeds, wind-carried.

## SIMILAR TAXA

There are several other *Betula* species in cultivation, *B. pendula* can be separated from most of them by the rhomboid leaves and the drooping growth habit.

## HABITAT

Terrestrial.

## GENUS

*Betula*

## FAMILY

Betulaceae

## AUTHORITY

*Betula pendula* Roth

## FLOWERING

September, October, November

## YEAR NATURALISED

1880

## ORIGIN

W. Asia, Asia Minor, Morocco

## REASON FOR INTRODUCTION

Ornamental

## LIFE CYCLE AND DISPERSAL

Reproduces by seed, suckering in wetlands. Dispersed by wind and people.

## WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING

FAC: Facultative

Commonly occurs as either a hydrophyte or non-hydrophyte (non-wetlands).



*Betula pendula*. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth, Licence: CC BY-NC.



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## ENVIRONMENTAL WEED (2024)

**This plant is named in a list of 386 environmental weeds in New Zealand 2024 prepared by DOC.** 759 candidate species were considered for inclusion on this new comprehensive list of environmental weeds in New Zealand. The species considered were drawn from published lists of weed species, lists of plants that must be reported or managed by law if observed, existing national and regional programmes and agreements for pest management, and species already managed by the Department of Conservation (DOC). Candidate species were then assessed to see if they were fully naturalised and whether they have more than minor impacts in natural ecosystems. Read the full report [here](#).

## NVS CODE

BETPEN

## MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/betula-pendula/>

## PDF DATE

25 May 2026