

Hello Trees Resource Sheet

What to look for outdoors in Summer

Tree ID: Silver Birch catkins



Have a magnifying glass in your pocket.



Silver birch bark.



Silver birch buds



Silver birch branching



To find a silver birch, use [Tree ID: Silver Birch](#) which

gives the **bark, bud, branching**



and **leaf** to look for.

Silver birch leaves



Now we only have **flowers** and **fruit** to find out about.

However, **flowers** will have developed into **fruit** during the summer, so we can't hope to see flowers at this time of year - only the fruit they have developed into.



Dry birch catkins



See if your silver birch has some dry catkins. These are brown on the outside, crispy and dry.



What do you think the catkin will be made of?



Clue: flowers develop into fruits or seeds in summer.



We expect to find seeds in these catkins.



Squidge the catkin into your hand.



Birch catkin pieces



There are two different shapes in your hand!
Each one is very small.



Which shape do you think is the seed?

The tiny yellow speck with transparent wings on either side?
Or the light-brown, bird-shaped pieces?



Yes, the yellow speck is the seed and the transparent wings are to carry it away in the wind to where it can take root and grow into a new birch tree.

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Pretend to be the wind and blow the pieces in your hand.



See how they scatter away from you.



Use your magnifying glass to have another look at the seeds and transparent wings.

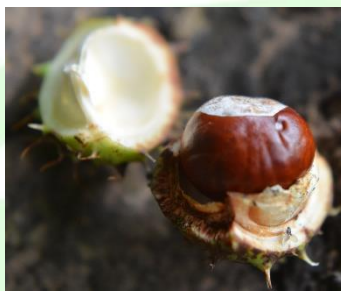


Would you say the seeds are small?

Think of other tree seeds you know.



A pair of acorns



A conker in its case

Acorns and conkers are much, much bigger than the tiny yellow specks that were in your hand.

I think it is amazing that a birch tree could grow from such a tiny thing as a birch seed.



A birch seed



But what are the light-brown, bird-shaped pieces doing in the catkin?



They hold the hundreds of seeds together neatly.



Can you make yourself into the shape of a seed holder?
Do you feel like a bird? Or like an aeroplane?

Try curving your arms inwards a little and imagine holding giant seeds under your arms.



Two kinds of birch catkins



Are there any other catkins on your silver birch tree?

If so, they might look like the ones at the bottom of this photo: smaller, greener and harder than the dry ones.



Do you think the green catkins will stay the same colour through the winter?



Do you think that by next autumn they will have become the catkins that are now dry and full of seeds?



It is fun to make notes and drawings of what you saw and did today - and what you think might happen next.



Now you have something to look out for as the seasons change.

There is more to the silver birch catkin story than you might think!



For more about birch trees, what came before and what comes next, see other Resource Sheets and Hello Trees book 'Betty Birch' at the [Hello Trees website](http://www.hellotrees.co.uk).