

# 'Summer Cascade' River Birch

'Summer Cascade' river birch (*Betula nigra* L.) PPAF is a new, weeping form of river birch that was discovered by John and Daniel Allen at Shiloh Nursery in Harmony, NC. The tree has a unique, pendulous habit with graceful arching branches. 'Summer Cascade' is ideal for use as a specimen tree or focal point, particularly with water features, or for use in group plantings or creative design elements including topiary.

## Detailed characteristics.

*Habit.* If untrained, the plant forms a mounded shrub or small tree with successive layers of arching branches. Alternatively, the plant can be staked/trained with a central trunk and pendulous branches. Flexible new growth also makes the tree ideal for use in topiary.

*Growth Rate.* Growth is fast. A 6 to 8 foot tall branched tree can be produced in one growing season from a rooted cutting.

*Size.* The original plant, grown free-form, is 6 feet tall and 10 feet wide after 10 years. When staked or trained, it can be grown as a tree to an undetermined height, but could potentially reach 60 feet as is typical for this species.

*Adaptability.* Typical of river birch, 'Summer Cascade' is extremely adaptable and tolerates a wide range of growing conditions including high temperatures and wet soils. Best growth occurs at a pH < 6 with moderate fertility and ample water.

*Pest resistance.* As with other river birch, 'Summer Cascade' is expected to have excellent resistance to Bronze Birch Borer and good resistance to Birch Leaf Miner.

*Propagation.* 'Summer Cascade' is easily propagated by softwood stem cuttings. Terminal and sub-terminal cuttings, from firm wood, can be rooted in high percentages (> 95%) when treated with 3,000 to 5,000 ppm indole butyric acid in 50% isopropyl alcohol.

*Licensing.* 'Summer Cascade' River Birch PPAF is being released as a joint introduction by Shiloh Nursery, North Carolina State University, and North Carolina Foundation Seed. Parties interested in propagating this tree can contact Thomas Ranney, Professor of Horticultural Science, Department of Horticultural Science, North Carolina State University, Mountain Horticultural Crops Research and Extension Center, Fletcher, North Carolina, 28732. Phone: 828-684-3562. email: tom\_ranney@ncsu.edu.

*Acknowledgements.* Funding and assistance in marketing and releasing this plant was provided by the North Carolina Specialty Crops Program, North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, and the Golden LEAF Foundation.

