



BIRCH

BIRCH. The genus *Betula* L. in Iran has been variously identified as *B. alba* L. (e.g., Sā'ī, I, p. 187; Parsa, IV, pp. 1343-45, VIII, p. 26) or *B. pendula* Roth. = *B. alba* L. subsp. *verrucosa* Regel, *B. ovata* C. Koch, etc. (e.g., Tābetī, p. 163). It is found in western Azerbaijan, along the Karaj river valley, Tālaqān, Towčāl, between Zīrāb and Šahmīrzād, etc. (southern slopes of the Alborz). Various foreign or indigenous names are indiscriminately mentioned for this tree in our sources, e.g., *betula* and *sandar* (both from Arabic sources, cf., e.g., Ghaleb, s. vv.), *qān/gān*, *qūš(a)/gūš(a)*, and *tūs*, but modern Iranian botanists seem to prefer *tūs*, which is the local name of the tree in Karaj and Šahrestānak valleys.

According to Sā'ī (loc. cit.) *tūs* timber is not strong enough for construction purposes, but it provides very good firewood and charcoal. Its twigs, delicate but strong, are used locally for making brooms, and its bark, which contains a lot of tannin, is employed in tanning. Further, Tābetī (p. 164) says that the tree was used in the past for the treatment of gout, but he does not specify which part(s) of it.



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