

Reviews

Bark Form and Wood Figure in Home-grown Birch

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THIS report by R. J. Newall and A. S. Gardiner deals with the study of the bark form of birch in relation to wood figure. The object of the study was to see if the external bark characteristics of a tree, in this case birch, could give any indication of its internal grain structure.

The summary goes on to add "Thirty trees of *Betula verrucosa* were examined to determine the variation in bark form, the pattern of the grain or figure, the length of the wood fibres and the relations between these characters of tree and wood.

The wood under thin smooth bark is generally, though not invariably straight-grained; the grain of the wood under thick rough bark is usually disturbed, sometimes giving rise to flamey figure. Fibre length is greater in mature trees with thin smooth bark than in mature trees with thick rough bark. The recorded range in fibre length is from 1.23 mm. to 1.54 mm.

Where birch has a place in silvicultural practice, the favouring of vigorous trees possessing good growth habit and straight nearly cylindrical stems with thin smooth bark will enhance the value of the crop for the plywood, turnery and pulp industries; the favouring of trees with certain types of rough bark is more likely to produce logs suitable for the manufacture of decorative veneer."

Though birch is not recognised in this country as a timber producing tree, the possibilities for quick recognition of its internal structure from external examination, which this report reveals, are significant. It may be that, in time, further research will reveal that other species can be evaluated by such a method.

M.J.S.