

White Birch (*Betula platyphylla*)

Family: Betulaceae
Genus: Betula
Tree height: 20–25 m

Observation Points in Each Season

Spring

Female catkins

Male catkins hang from the tip of branches.

White striped long-horned beetle (*Batocera lineolata*) eating living trees

Summer

Catkins hang from the base of leaves.

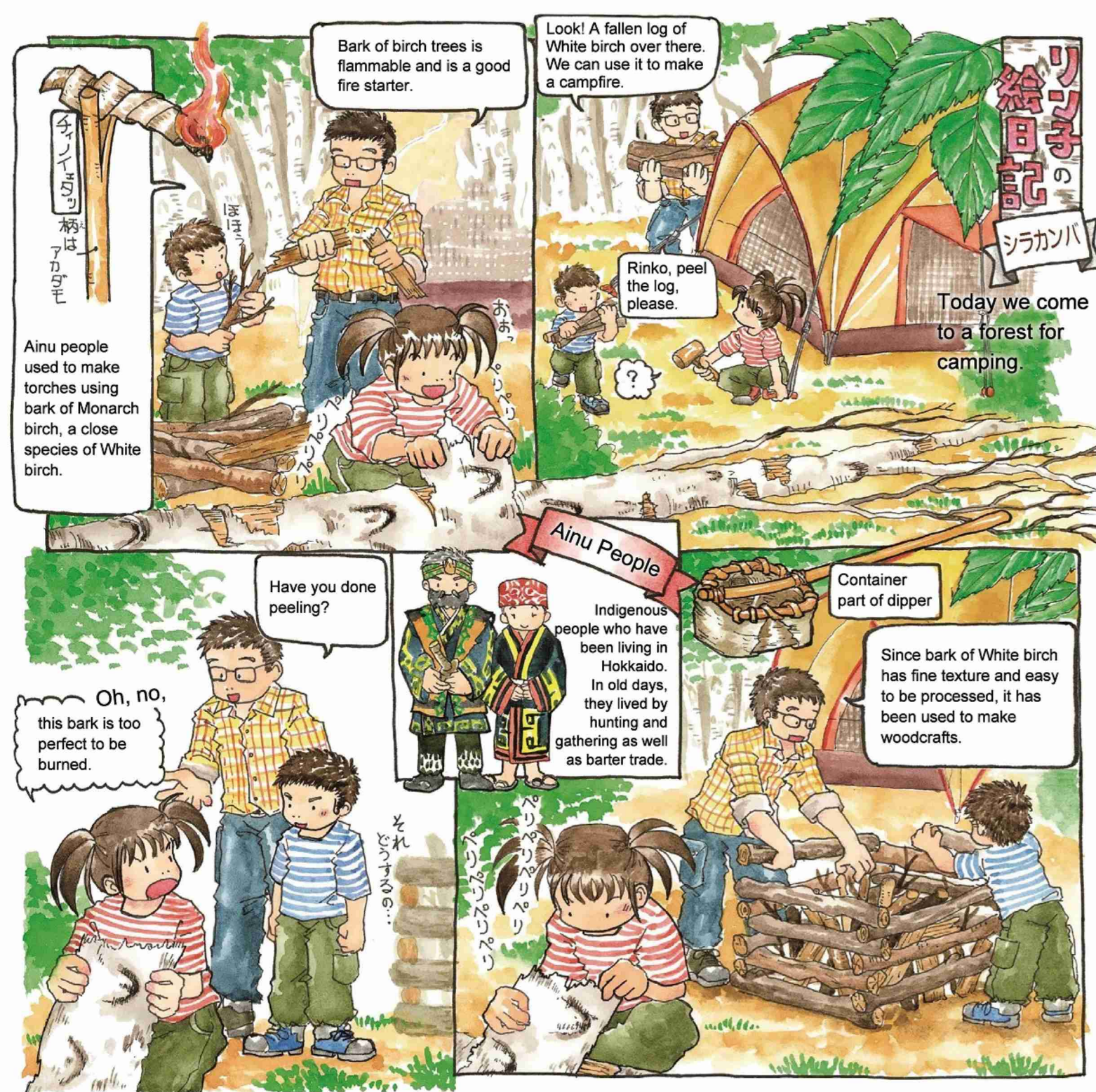
Fall

Leaves turn yellow and catkins ripen brown.

Compton Tortoiseshell (*Nymphalis vaualbum*) sucking tree sap

Winter

White birch shows specific mountain-shaped black marks on the bark.



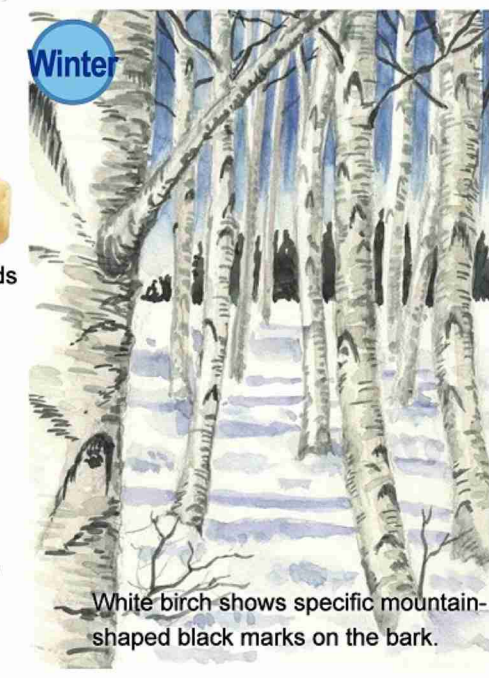
Ainu People and White Birch

Ainu people used to collect tree sap of White birch in the early spring. They drank the sap as it was or made alcoholic liquor from it.

White Birch in People's Living

Since White birch retains a large amount of water, tree sap can be collected by making holes in the trunk in spring before snow melting. The sap tastes slightly sweet and can get syrup by boiling down. It is also a material of xylitol.

The bark is used for making crafts and fire starter. In addition, the wood is soft with beautiful grain pattern and is used as interior materials.



White birch is the representative pioneer tree species in Hokkaido. The Pioneer species are hardy species which immediately enter into barren environments disrupted by a disaster, such as wildfire or typhoon, grow rapidly, and eventually formulate pure forest. White birch is a sun-loving tree which grows quickly in full sun. But, it cannot grow in shade. Its lifespan is about 100 years, shorter than other tree species.

