



# Salix sericea

## silky willow

Family Salicaceae

Origin Native

WIS Code OBL CoC 5

### DESCRIPTION

Shrub to 4 m tall with brittle branches and purplish velvety twigs. Leaves are alternate, narrowly lance-like (2 to 14 cm long; 1 to 3 cm wide), gradually tapering to a pointed tip, and with finely toothed margins. Leaf surfaces are dark green and slightly hairy to smooth above, and whitish (glaucous) with silky dense hairs below. Leaf stalks (petioles) are 2 to 13 mm long, and bracts (stipules) at the base of petioles are very small or absent.

### FLOWERS AND FRUITS

March through April. Flower heads appear in the spring before the leaves, with male and female flowers clustered on spikes (catkins) on separate plants. Male catkins are 1 to 2 cm and female to 4 cm. Fruits are capsules 3 to 5 mm.

### HABITAT

Swamps, bogs, fens, seeps, and stream banks.

### SIMILAR SPECIES

*Salix nigra*, black willow, a shrub or tree (5 to 25 m tall) has green to brown (not purple) twigs, the leaves are smooth on both sides and some have large stipules. *Salix caroliniana*, coastal plain willow, also has whitish (glaucous) lower leaf surfaces, but the leaves are hairy with conspicuous persistent stipules. The flowers appear along with the leaves (not before).



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Female catkin



Male catkin

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