

Laurel Willow



Laurel Willow (*Salix pentandra*)

General Description

A small to medium-sized tree that is often seen in a shrubby form. One of the first to leaf out in spring and last to drop its leaves in autumn. Attractive, highly glossy leaves and round crown. The largest tree in North Dakota is 45 feet tall with a canopy spread of 36 feet.

Leaves and Buds

Bud Arrangement - Alternate.

Bud Color - Terminal buds absent, laterals brownish-green.

Bud Size - Buds are 1/5 inch long, rounded at apex, and flattened against the twig.

Leaf Type and Shape - Simple, elliptic-lanceolate to ovate.

Leaf Margins - Short-acuminate, rounded or subcordate at base.

Leaf Surface - Leathery, glabrous and highly glossy.

Leaf Length - 2 to 3½ inches.

Leaf Width - 2/3 to 1 inch.

Leaf Color - Lustrous, dark-green above, lighter below with a yellowish midrib.

Flowers and Fruits

Flower Type - Catkin.

Flower Color - Golden-yellow.

Fruit Type - Capsule, cottony or silky hairy seeds.

Fruit Color - Greenish-yellow to tan.

Form

Growth Habit - Ascending branches, long and flexible limbs, rounded crown.

Texture - Medium-fine, summer; medium, winter.

Crown Height - 25 to 40 feet.

Crown Width - 20 to 35 feet.

Bark Color - Gray-brown and fissured.

Root System - Shallow and wide-spreading.

Environmental Requirements

Soils

Soil Texture - Performs best on moist deep loams along streams or wetlands.

Soil pH - 5.5 to 8.0.

Windbreak Suitability Group - 1, 1K, 2, 2K, 2H.

Cold Hardiness

USDA Zone 3.

Water

Does well on moist sites and survives flooding. May die back during periods of extended drought.

Light

Full sun to partial shade.

Uses

Conservation/Windbreaks

Small to medium height tree for farmstead windbreaks and riparian plantings.

Wildlife

Very good for wildlife. Used as food and cover for a wide variety of wetland wildlife.

Agroforestry Products

Wood - Firewood, furniture, crafts.

Medicinal - Used as an astringent and for fevers, gout, pain and headaches. Contains salicin used in aspirin.

Urban/Recreational

Moist areas in parks and other landscape sites. The glossy foliage and dense round form make this a good ornamental tree where moist sites are available.

Cultivated Varieties

None.

Related Species

Prairie Cascade Willow (*Salix* x 'Prairie Cascade') - Parentage Laurel Willow x Weeping Golden Willow released from Morden Research Station, Morden, Manitoba. A weeping form.

White Willow (*Salix alba*)

Pests

No serious disease problems, but can be subject to leaf diseases. Aphids can be a problem.