

Redstem Willow



Redstem Willow

(*Salix alba*
'Chermesina')

General Description

A large low-branching tree forming an upright, oval to rounded crown. Widely planted as a yard tree. Brought over from Europe and central Asia.

Leaves and Buds

Bud Arrangement - Alternate.

Bud Color - Yellow to reddish-orange with a silky down.

Bud Size - 1/5 inch long, rounded at apex, and flattened against the twig with a single, cap-like bud scale.

Leaf Type and Shape - Simple, lanceolate, acuminate, and cuneate.

Leaf Margins - Finely-serrate.

Leaf Surface - Smooth above, glaucous and silky beneath.

Leaf Length - 1½ to 4 inches.

Leaf Width - 1/4 to 5/8 inch.

Leaf Color - Bright green on top, silvery-gray below.

Flowers and Fruits

Flower Type - Catkins 3/4 to 2½ inches long.

Flower Color - Yellowish-green.

Fruit Type - Capsule, seed attached to cottony hairs.

Fruit Color - Brownish-white.

Form

Growth Habit - Large, upright pyramidal, becoming more rounded.

Texture - Fine, summer; medium, winter.

Crown Height - 40 to 60 feet.

Crown Width - 30 to 45 feet.

Bark Color - New growth reddish-orange, becoming yellowish-brown.

Root System - Fibrous spreading.

Environmental Requirements

Soils

Soil Texture - Performs best on deep moist loams, or along stream beds and wetlands.

Soil pH - 5.5 to 8.0 - Adaptable to high pH soils.

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

Cold Hardiness

USDA Zone 2.

Water

Does well in moist sites and survives severe flooding. Often dies back during periods of extended drought.

Light

Full sun to partial shade.

Uses

Conservation/Windbreaks

Medium to tall tree for farmstead and field windbreaks and riparian plantings. Grows taller and more upright than White and Golden Willows. Redstem Willow merits increased acceptance for windbreak plantings.

Wildlife

Dense form provides cover to many wildlife species. Buds and twigs are used by upland game and song birds. Mammals feed on buds, bark and wood. Small mammals feed on foliage and catkins. Hoofed browsers feed on twigs and foliage.

Agroforestry Products

Wood - Used for fuelwood, pallets, crates, unexposed furniture parts, cooperage, woodenware and carving.

Medicinal - Early Americans and Europeans used an extract for headaches, fever, gout and pain. Willow is a source of salicin which is broken down to salicylic acid, the main component in aspirin.

Urban/Recreational

Very attractive and functional shade, windbreak and accent tree. (See Flame Willow below).

Cultivated Varieties

Flame Willow (*Salix alba* 'Flame') - An improved, dense, ornamental red-stemmed willow released by Bergeson Nursery, Fertile, Minnesota.

Golden Willow (*S. alba* 'Vitellina')

Siberian White Willow (*S. alba* 'Sericea') - Silvery-gray, hairy leaves.

Weeping Golden Willow (*S. alba* 'Tristis') - Popular specimen yard tree but very messy due to twig drop.

Related Species

Peach-leaved Willow (*Salix amygdaloides*)

Laurel Willow (*S. pentandra*)

Pests

Common diseases include Cytospora canker and leaf spots. Insect pests include aphids, lace bug, sawfly and scales.