



BLACK WILLOW *Salix nigra* Marsh.

WILLOWS *Salix* spp. L.

Maine has many willows, but this is a large and difficult group to identify. The Revised Checklist of the Vascular Plants of Maine, 1995 (see Appendix Four, p. 105) shows 58 native and exotic species, varieties, and hybrids known to be present in the state.

Maine's willows range in size from large trees to small prostrate shrubs found in the alpine tundra. With the exception of black willow, most of Maine's native willows are small trees or shrubs. Some of the exotic species can grow to be very large. All willows share the following characteristics: Buds are covered with a single, cap-like scale with silky, gray hairs beneath the scale. Leaves are alternate, mostly narrow, and the petioles are short or lacking. Flowers occur in catkins. Fruits consist of small, usually two-valved capsules filled with silky hairs that are attached to the seeds.

Black willow occurs primarily in southern and western Maine. It grows to a height of 45–65 feet, and is found along streams and ponds. The stout, upright, spreading branches give the tree a broad, irregular outline. It is probably our largest native willow. The **bark** on old trees is shaggy and dark brown. The **leaves** are very narrow, sometimes sickle-shaped, finely-toothed, 3–6 inches long and green on both sides. The **wood** is soft, light, weak and is used occasionally for farm lumber and pulp.



Top right: A typical willow twig.

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Black Willow Circumference: 266" Height: 84'

Crown Spread: 64' Location: Yarmouth

