

***Salix sessilifolia* Nutt.**
soft-leaved willow
Salicaceae (Willow Family)

Status: State Sensitive
Rank: G4S2

General Description: Adapted from Hitchcock et al. (1964) and Hanners (1989): *Salix sessilifolia* is a shrub or small tree that is 7 to 26 feet (2-8 m) tall, with a trunk that is up to 4 in. (10cm) thick. The leaves, young twigs, and capsules are copiously covered with long or short, soft, loose, unmatted hairs, but less so with age. The leaf-like appendages (stipules) at the base of the petiole (leaf stalk) are minute and soon deciduous. The petiole is less than 1/16 in. (1-5 mm) long. The leaf blades are lance-shaped to lance-elliptic or oblong, and 2.5 to 10 times as long as wide; both sides are light green, densely pubescent, and soft and velvety to the touch. The aments (inflorescences consisting of a dense spike of unisexual flowers that lack petals) develop on leafy branchlets after the leaves are fully developed and are 1 1/8 to 2 in. (3-5 cm) long. The scales of the flowers are yellow, hairy and deciduous. The 2 stamens have filaments that are conspicuously hairy toward the base and long, slender stigma lobes. The capsules are 1/16 to 1/8 in. (3-5 mm) long.

Identification Tips: *Salix sessilifolia* closely resembles *S. fluviatilis*. The two species “probably hybridize to some extent, yet they maintain their individuality” (Hitchcock et al. 1964). The young leaves and twigs of *S. sessilifolia* are loosely and copiously covered with soft, unmatted hairs (but less so with age) on both sides, and the leaves are 2.5 to 10 times as long as wide, whereas the young leaves and twigs of *S. fluviatilis* are covered with stiff, appressed hairs (rapidly becoming hairless) and the leaves are 5 to 20 times as long as wide. The pistillate aments of *S. sessilifolia* are 1-1/8 to 2 in. (3-5 cm) long, while the pistillate aments of *S. fluviatilis* are 1½ to 4 in. (4-10 cm) long. A technical key is recommended for identification.

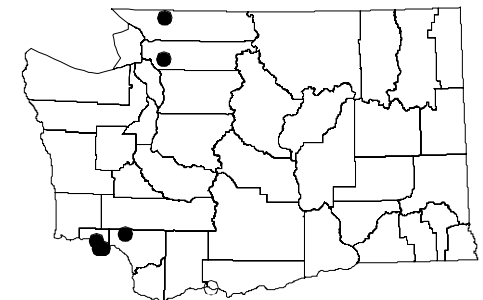
Phenology: *Salix sessilifolia* generally flowers from May through June. In Washington it has been observed from May through December, since someone familiar with the plant can identify it after flowering.

Salix sessilifolia
soft-leaved willow



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Known distribution
of *Salix sessilifolia*
in Washington



● Current (1980+)
○ Historic (older than 1980)

Salix sessilifolia

soft-leaved willow



Ken Chambers



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Range: This species is distributed from British Columbia to Washington, Oregon and northern California. In Washington it has been found in Cowlitz, Klickitat, Wahkiakum, Skagit, and Whatcom counties.

Habitat: In Washington *Salix sessilifolia* has been found in a number of lowland habitats: a riparian forest, in dredge spoils, and on a silty bank at the upper edge of an intertidal zone. Associated species at one or more sites include: Sitka willow (*Salix sitchensis*), heartleaf willow (*S. rigida*), black cottonwood (*Populus trichocarpa*), red alder (*Alnus rubra*), big-leaf maple (*Acer macrophyllum*) and red-osier dogwood (*Cornus stolonifera*).

State Status Comments: This species is known from less than 10 occurrences, one of which is historic.

Inventory Needs: Known occurrences should be revisited for updated population information. Appropriate habitat in Cowlitz, Klickitat, Wahkiakum, Skagit, and Whatcom counties should be systematically surveyed for possible populations.

Threats and Management Concerns: Heavy recreational use may have a detrimental effect on some existing populations.

References:

Hanners, Al. 1989. Keys to NW lowland willows in flower, leaf, and in bud. Unpublished. On file with WNHP.

Hitchcock, C.L., A. Cronquist, M. Ownbey, J.W. Thompson. 1964. *Vascular Plants of the Pacific Northwest Part 2: Salicaceae to Saxifragaceae*. University of Washington Press, Seattle, WA. 597 pp.