

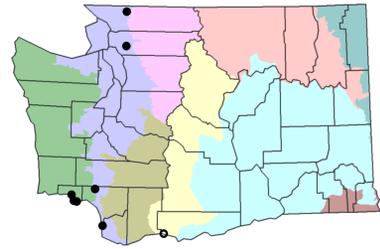
Salix sessilifolia Nutt.

soft-leaved willow

Salicaceae - willow family

status: State Sensitive, BLM sensitive, USFS sensitive

rank: G4 / S2



General Description: Shrub or small tree 2-8 m tall, with a trunk up to 1 dm thick; leaves, young twigs, and capsules copiously covered with long, soft, loose, unmatted hairs, but less so with age. Stipules minute, deciduous; petioles 1-5 mm long. Leaf blades lance-shaped to oblong, (2.5) 3-7 (10) times as long as wide, the well-developed ones 3-10 x 1-3.5 cm; both sides are light green, densely hairy, soft and velvety to the touch, and have margins toothed with small, widely spaced teeth (sometimes entire). Winter buds covered with a single, nonresinous, caplike scale.

Floral Characteristics: Male and female catkins borne on separate plants. Catkins develop on leafy branchlets after the leaves develop. Floral scales yellow to light yellowish green, hairy, and deciduous. Stamens 2; filaments conspicuously hairy below. Female catkins 3-5 (10) cm long; stigma lobes long and slender. Flowers May to June.

Fruits: Capsules hairy, 3-5 mm long, occasionally 3-valved.

Identification Tips: The young leaves and twigs of *S. sessilifolia* are copiously covered with soft, loose, unmatted hairs on both sides, and the leaves are 2.5-10 times as long as wide. In contrast, the young leaves and twigs of *S. columbiana** are silvery from stiff, appressed hairs (rapidly becoming greener and nearly hairless), and the leaves are 5-15 (20) times as long as wide. The female catkins of *S. columbiana** are 4-10 cm long, generally longer than those of *S. sessilifolia*.

Range: Southern B.C., south to northern CA.

Habitat/Ecology: Wet lowland habitats, including silty or sandy riverbanks, riparian forests, dredge spoils, sandy beaches, and at the upper edge of an intertidal zone. Associated species include Sitka willow (*Salix sitchensis*), Pacific willow (*S. lucida* ssp. *lasiandra*), Columbia River willow (*S. fluviatilis*), black cottonwood (*Populus balsamifera* ssp. *trichocarpa*), red alder (*Alnus rubra*), big-leaf maple (*Acer macrophyllum*), and red-osier dogwood (*Cornus sericea* ssp. *sericea*).

Comments: Current threats at some sites include heavy recreational use, competition from invasive plants, and highway reconstruction. This taxon is also rare in B.C.

References: Douglas et al. 1998-2002, vol. 5.



Illustration by Jeanne R. Janish,
©1964 University of Washington
Press



© Kenton Chambers



© Kenton Chambers