

## ***Salix vestita*** Pursh

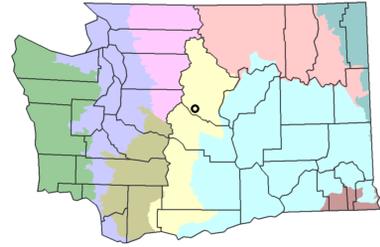
synonym: *Salix vestita* Pursh var. *erecta* Andersson

rock willow

Salicaceae - willow family

status: State Possibly Extirpated, BLM strategic, USFS  
strategic

rank: G5 / SH



**General Description:** Stout shrub, (1) 2-10 (20) dm tall, with crooked, angular, yellow brown to gray brown twigs, hairless or scarcely covered with long, soft hairs. Leaves alternate. Stipules absent or minute; petioles stout, mostly 4-10 mm long. Leaf blades green, thick, firm, becoming hairless with age, the upper surface with sunken veins, the lower surface white-waxy, persistently covered with long, soft, white hairs, elliptic to broadly egg-shaped, 2-6 x 1-4 cm, with tips broadly rounded to pointed; margins slightly rolled under and scattered with very inconspicuous glands. Winter buds covered with a single, nonresinous, caplike scale.

**Floral Characteristics:** Male and female catkins borne on separate plants, developing after the leaves. Floral bracts light brown, persistent, and conspicuously covered with short, soft hairs. Male catkins slender, 1.5-3 cm x 5 mm; stamens 2, filaments long-hairy below. Female catkins (1) 2-5 cm long at maturity; style very short, together with the stigma less than 0.5 mm long.

**Fruits:** Capsules stalkless or nearly so, covered with soft hairs, 3-5 mm long, stoutly egg-shaped, not obviously beaked. Throughout its range this taxon is identifiable July to September, but phenology may vary with elevation and latitude.

**Identification Tips:** This taxon is closely related to another alpine willow in WA, *Salix nivalis*. However, *S. vestita* is a dwarf shrub usually greater than 2 dm tall, while *S. nivalis* is a low mat-forming plant seldom as much as 1 dm tall.

**Range:** Throughout much of eastern Canada and the Rocky Mt. region, from southern Alberta and B.C. to MT, OR, and WA.

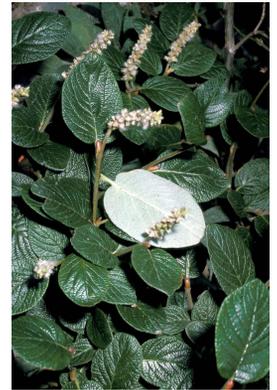
**Habitat/Ecology:** Open, rocky streamsides, moist meadows, and wet seeps at high altitudes in the mountains, commonly near or above timberline. Elevation in WA : 2100 m (7000 ft).

**Comments:** Known in WA from only 1 historical occurrence and 1 recent unconfirmed report. As with other dwarf willows, this taxon is easily damaged by foot traffic, livestock trampling, and grazing. It is also rare in MT, Manitoba, Quebec, and Nova Scotia.

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



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