

## featured tree

# Pacific Willow (*Salix lucida*)

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Pacific willow (*Salix lucida*) is a tall, slender tree or large shrub that grows 15 to 45 feet high. Its distinctive leaves are long, thin and shiny with finely toothed edges.

Well-known for its many medicinal purposes, willow produces salicin, closely related to acetylsalicylic acid (aspirin). Various preparations have been used to treat sore throats, colds, toothache and stomach ache. Native Americans used its bark for making tea, and the stems for bow making.

The fruits of this tree are thick “catkins,” light reddish-brown and six to eight millimeters long. Bark is furrowed with broad flat scaly plates.

### Uses and management

Pacific willow is well-known for its excellent ability to colonize disturbed sites - especially for streambank stabilization projects. Willows have a high rooting ability and cuttings are often used for revegetation projects.

Primarily riparian, these trees are not well-suited as street trees as they are messy, their roots often lift sidewalks, and their wood is quite brittle and prone to breakage. For streambank stabilization projects, however, they are superb.

### Distribution

Pacific willow is found growing along stream banks from British Columbia southward to Southern California and New Mexico, often where its roots can easily reach subsurface water.

Elk browse the young shoots of Pacific willow, and these trees provide cover and food for many wildlife species, including mule deer and beaver.

Cultivars are available from wetland plant nurseries or you may also contact your local Natural Resources Conservation Service office for more information. 🌿



Photos by Wenell Wood, Oregon Wild

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