



Weeping Willow

Salix x sepulcralis Simonkai [*alba* x ?*pendulina*]

Synonyms: *Salix babylonica* auct. non L. p.p. [misapplied], *Salix xchrysocoma* Dode, *Salix salomonii* hort., *Salix xsepulcralis* Simonkai var. *chrysocoma* (Dode) Meikle

Native Origin: China

Description: Weeping willow is a deciduous tree in the willow family (*Salicaceae*) that grows 35 to 70 feet in height. It is easily recognized by its short trunk (2 feet in diameter) and broad, open, irregular crown of drooping golden yellow branches. The bark is grayish-brown

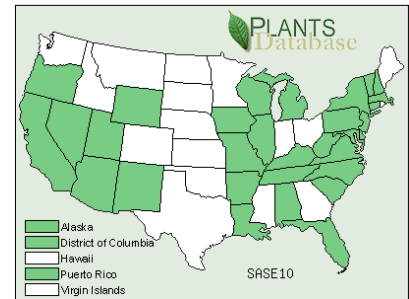
deeply and coarsely fissured. The leaves are narrow, lance-shaped, alternate, finely saw-toothed, long-pointed tips, and 2 1/2-5 inches long and up to 1/4-1/2 inches wide. They are bright green above, bluish-green below, and only hairy, on both surfaces, when young. Leaves hang from short leafstalks. Male and female flowers are yellow and appear in catkins with the leaves on separate trees (dioecious) in April. Fruit appears as a 1/16 inch long light brown capsule in late spring or early summer. The small seeds have long, silky hairs that attach to one end like a parachute, which help them spread. Trees form large, dense root-mats on the surface of the soil or in shallow water. They reproduce by stems and twigs breaking off and taking root or by seed, which can be carried up to approximately 60 miles by wind or water.



Weeping willow shades out and displaces native vegetation, potentially leading to erosion and poor water quality.

Habitat: Weeping willow grows in part shade/part sun and full sun. It is adaptable to clay, loam, sand, acidic, or alkaline soils in areas with extended flooding or well-drained. Plants are often found near rivers, lakes, wetlands, parks, forest edges and gardens.

Distribution: This species is reported from states shaded on Plants Database map. It is considered invasive in CT, DC, IL, NC, NY, OR, WA, and WV.



Ecological Impacts: Weeping willows can spread roots into the bed of a watercourse, slowing the flow of water and reducing aeration. Trees form thickets which divert water outside the main watercourse or channel, causing flooding and erosion where the creek banks are vulnerable. The leaves create a flush of organic matter when they drop in autumn, reducing water quality and available oxygen, and directly threatening aquatic plants and animals. These factors, together with the amount of water willows use, can damage stream health.



Control and Management:

- **Manual-** Hand pull small seedlings; use large machinery such as excavators or bulldozers to remove larger trees and root systems in dry areas; control of regrowth from stumps, pieces of stems or seeds may be required for 3-5 years after initial control.
- **Chemical-** It can be effectively controlled using any of several readily available general use herbicides such as glyphosate. In wet areas use glyphosate approved for aquatic applications. Follow label and state requirements.

- **Natural Enemies-** Pests include scales, caterpillars, borers, and aphids. The willow is a favored host for the gypsy moth.

References: <http://plants.usda.gov>, www.nps.gov/plants/alien/map/eucy1.htm, <http://images.google.com/images>, www.saps.plantsci.cam.ac.uk/trees/willowweep.htm, www.enature.com/fieldguides/detail.asp?recnum=TS0170, <http://hort.ufl.edu/trees/SALSPPA.pdf> www.deh.gov.au/biodiversity/invasive/publications/salix.html