

# White willow

## *Salix alba*

### Description

Used in the production of gun powder and tanning leather. Also used for its medicinal properties.

### Habit

Perennial tree to 80 ft; widely spreading crown; yellowish-brown twigs; grayish-brown, irregularly furrowed bark.

### Leaves

Alternate, simple, lanceolate to narrow ovate, 2-4 inches long, finely serrated, shiny green above, nearly white and silky below.

### Stems

Very slender; smooth or slightly downy; yellowish brown (golden); flexible; buds are small, appressed and covered by a single, cap-like scale; terminal buds lacking.

### Flowers

Dioecious, males and females appear as upright,





yellowish, fuzzy catkins; 1 1/2 to 2 in long,  
appearing before or with the leaves.

### **Fruits and Seeds**

1-2 in long cluster of valve-like, light brown  
capsules; contains many fine, cottony seeds;  
ripen in late spring to early summer.

### **Habitat**

Native to Europe, North Africa and central Asia. Grows well in moist soils and can be found along  
lakeshores and stream banks.

### **Reproduction**

Vegetatively.

### **Similar**

Peachleaf Willow (*Salix amygdaloides*); Laurel Willow (*Salix pentandra*).

### **Monitoring and Rapid Response**

Hand pull small seedlings; use machinery to remove larger trees and root systems in dry areas;  
effectively controlled using any of several readily available general use herbicides such as glyphosate.

### **Credits**

The information provided in this factsheet was gathered from the USDA PLANTS Database and  
Virginia Tech Department of Forest Resources and Environmental Conservation VTree. Individual  
species images that appear with a number in a black box are courtesy of the Bugwood.org network  
(<http://www.invasive.org>). Individual photo author credits may not be included due to the small display  
size of the images and subsequent difficulty of reading the provided text. All other images appear  
courtesy of Google (<http://images.google.com>).