

WILLOWS (*SALIX*) OF COLORADO THEIR ECOLOGY & IDENTIFICATION BY GWEN KITTEL

Available as Spiral bound paperback or an E-book, 267 pages

## PURPOSE OF THIS WORK:



Enable students, restoration ecologists, researchers, and amateur and professional botanists to successfully identify willows



### All Colorado taxa (40)

Native and Non-native

Taxonomy follows Dorn 2010, with a few exceptions Introduction to willows and their Ecology How to Identify willows Species Descriptions Glossary Index

### Appendices

Botanical Author Rules Colorado Willow Author Biographies Willow species in adjoining states

# 1) INTRODUCTION TO WILLOWS & ECOLOGY

Ecology

**Climate Change** 

Human Cultural Usage and Folklore

# 2) HOW TO IDENTIFY WILLOWS

Common Terms Defined and Illustrated

•What to observe in the field

### •Four Keys

• Vegetative, Male and Female Catkins, & Winter/Dormant

How to make good Collections

Hybridization

•Taxonomy

Illustrated Comparisons of Similar Species



# TERM ILLUSTRATIONS



Figure 7. Glaucous Leaves and Pruinose Stems.

(a) Glaucous coating occurs on the abaxial (underneath) side of leaves, is difficult to remove, and often results in a strong contrast of color between the top and bottom sides of the leaf-upper leaf top side (adaxial) not glaucous; lower leaf underneath side (abaxial) is glaucous (Salix lasiandra var. lasiandra.)

(b) Non-glaucous leaf of Salix boothii. Upper: top of leaf, lower: underneath, non-glaucous side.

(c) Strongly pruinose twigs of Salix drummondiana. This waxy coating is easily rubbed off.

(d) Sometimes not all twigs are pruinose.

(e) Pruinose can reside only under the buds, as shown on this branch.



Figure 9. Catkins change and mature throughout the growing season. Salix monticola catkins at different stages of the growing season.

(a) Very early catkins or "pussy willows." Anthers are just emerging from this male catkin. Note that at this stage we cannot determine the number of stamens per flower, the final length of the catkin, nor if it will have a peduncle (stalk) with or without leaves.

(b) A mature female catkin: at this stage we can determine capsule pubescence, style, catkin, and peduncle length, and its leafiness. (c) An early female catkin.

(d) A mature male catkin.

(e) An over-mature female catkin, capsules tend to lose any pubescence by this stage. The white fluffy stuff are seeds emerging.

# COMPARISON FIGURES



Figure 11. Compare native Salix amygdaloides and non-native Salix fragilis. Both are trees of lower elevations.

(a, b, c) Salix amygdaloides trunks often leaning and/or misshaped. Leaves are pale green, thin, with a long narrow accumulate tip, and weak petioles— so that the leaves appear to dangle from their branches.

(d, e, f) Salix fragilis are trunks usually fairly straight and are often multiple. Leaves are dark green, thick with coarse teeth, and long accumulate tip, and strong petioles, so that the leaves are erect on their branches.



### Figure 16. Compare Salix brachycarpa and Salix glauca.

(a) Both are found in subalpine and alpine habitats, are short shrubs (<4 feet tall), and generally look identical from a distance. Both species' leaves are hairy on both sides.

(b) Salix brachycarpa leaf petiole usually <3 mm long.

(c) Salix brachycarpa catkins usually < 2 cm long, peduncle0.2-2 mm.

(d) Salix glauca leaf petiole usually >3 mm.

(e) Salix glauca catkins usually >2 cm long., peduncle 0.2-3.5 mm.

# INFORMATIVE TABLES

**Common Willows by Elevation** 

Rare & Less Common Willows by Elevation

Comparison of FNA with Dorn 2010

**Catkin Characteristics** 



		_							-	
	Size	Salix taxa	Timing of Flowers vs. Leaves	Catkin Length (cm)	Peduncle Leafi- ness	Peduncle Length (cm)	Fl. Bract Color & Persist.	Caps Sur- face	Caps Length (mm)	# Stam
		alba	coe	(2.5) 3-7	Leafy	(0.3) 1-4	Pale, decid	glabr	3-5	2
		amyg- daloides	coe	2.3-11 (12.7)	Leafy	0.3-3.5 (6)	Pale, decid	glabr	3-7	3-7
		babyl- onica	sub to coe	1-3.5 (4)	Leafy	(0) 0.2-1.5	Pale, decid	glabr	(1.5) 2.8- 3.8	2
	S	fragilis	coe	(2) 4-8	Leafy	1-5	Pale, decid	glabr	4-5.5	2
	Tree	gooddingii	сое	1.9-8	Leafy	0.4-3	Pale, decid	glabr occ villous	3-7	4-6 (8)
-										

### Table 6. Catkin & Flower Characteristics of Colorado Salix Species.

Values in parentheses are rare extremes. Abbreviations used: caps= capsules, coe= coetaneous, pre= precocious, sub= sub-precocious, sero= serotinous, subs=sub-sessile, glabr= glabrous, pube= pubescence, persist=persistence. See glossary for definitions.

Size	Salix taxa	Timing of Flowers vs. Leaves	Catkin Length (cm)	Peduncle Leafi- ness	Peduncle Length (cm)	FI. Bract Color & Persist.	Caps Sur- face	Caps Length (mm)	# Stam
	alba	coe	(2.5) 3-7	Leafy	(0.3) 1-4	Pale, decid	glabr	3-5	2
	amyg- daloides	coe	2.3-11 (12.7)	Leafy	0.3-3.5 (6)	Pale, decid	glabr	3-7	3-7
	babyl- onica	sub to coe	1-3.5 (4)	Leafy	(0) 0.2-1.5	Pale, decid	glabr	(1.5) 2.8- 3.8	2
s	fragilis	coe	(2) 4-8	Leafy	1-5	Pale, decid	glabr	4-5.5	2
Tree	gooddingii	coe	1.9-8	Leafy	0.4-3	Pale, decid	glabr occ villous	3-7	4-6 (8)
	matsu- dana	coe	1-3.5 (4)	Leafy	(0) 0.2-1.5	Pale, decid	glabr	(1.5) 2.8- 3.8	2
	nigra	coe	1.7-9	Leafy	0.4-2.3 (4.5)	Pale, decid	glabr (pilose)	3-6	4-6
	pentandra	coe	2-8.5	Leafy	0.9-9	Pale, decid	glabr	6-9	4-10
	bebbiana	ଁ sub ହ coe	0.6-6(8.5)	Leafy	0.1-6	Pale, pers	pube	5-9	2
	boothii	coe to sub	0.7-6.2(7)	Leafy	0.1-1(1.5)	Dark, pers	glabr	2.5-6	2
	cinerea	pre	2.6- 6.5(7.5)	none	Sessile to 0.5(1.0)	Dark, pers	pube	5-6.5	2
	discolor	pre (coe)	2-8(13.5)	None (leafy)	Sessile to 2.5	Dark, per	pube	5-11	2
	drummon- diana	pre (sub)	1.5-6(11)	None or leafy	Sessile to subs 0- 0.3(6)	Dark, pers	pube	2.5-6	2
Shrubs	e. ssp. e.† var. famelica	∂pre to sub, ⊊coe	1-7.4 (11.5)	None or leafy	Sessile to 0.9(1.1)	Dark, pers	glabr	3-6	2
Tall	e. ssp. m.†† var. ligulifolia	coe (sub)	1.5-6	None or leafy	Sessile to 0.9	Dark, pers	glabr	3.5-6	2
	e. ssp. m.†† var. watsonii	sub to coe	1-6	None or leafy	Sessile to 0.7(1.7)	Dark, pers	glabr	3-5.5	2
	ssp. exigua	coe or sero	(1)1.5-10	Leafy	0.2-1.8	Pale, decid	glabr or pube	3-5(8)	2
	ssp. interior	coe or sero	(0.5)1.5-10	Leafy	0.3-1.9	Pale, decid	glabr or pube	(4)5- 8(10)	2
	geyeriana	coe (sub)	(0.1)0.6- 2(2.5)	Leafy	0.1-1.2 (1.8)	Pale or dark, pers	pube	3-6	2

Size	Salix taxa	Timing of Flowers vs. Leaves	Catkin Length (cm)	Peduncle Leafi- ness	Peduncle Length (cm)	Fl. Bract Color & Persist.	Caps Sur- face	Caps Length (mm)	# Stam
	irrorata	pre or sub	1.4-4.2	None or leafy	Sessile to 0.5	Dark, pers	glabr	3-5	2
	var. lasiandra & var. caudata	coe	1.7-10.3	Leafy	0.5-6.5	Pale, decid	glabr	4-11	3-6
	melan- opsis	coe or sero	1.5-8	Leafy	0.3-7	Pale, decid	glabr	4-6	2
	monticola	∛pre-sub, ♀coe	1-5(6)	None or leafy	Subs to 0.8 (1.7)	Dark, pers	glabr	4-7	2
s	petiolaris	coe (sub)	1-3.9	Leafy	0.08-2	Dark, pers	pube	5-9	2
Shrub	planifolia	pre or sub	(1)1.5-6.7 (7)	None	Sessile, subs 0-0.6	Dark, pers	pube	(2.5) 5.5-6	2
Tall	purpurea	pre	1.35-3.6	None	Sessile, subs 0-3	Dark, pers	pube	2.5-5	2*
	scouler- iana	pre	1.5-6(9)	None (leafy)	Sessile to 1.3	Dark, pers	pube	4.5-11	2
	serissima	coe	(1)2- 5.5(6.5)	Leafy	(0.5)1- 5(6.5)	Pale, decid	glabr	(6)7- 12	3-9
	arizonica	pre to coe	(0.5)1-4	None or leafy	Sessile to 1.2	Dark, pers	glabr	3.2- 4.5(5)	2
	boothii	coe to sub	0.7-6.2(7)	Leafy	0.1-1(1.5)	Dark, pers	glabr	2.5-6	2
	brachy- carpa	coe	0.5-2(3)	Leafy	0.2-2	Dark, pers	pube	3-6(7)	2
s	calcicola	pre	(1.5) 3-7.5 (10)	None	Sessile to 0.5	Dark, pers	glabr	4-9	2
rt Shrub	candida	coe or sub	(0.5) 1-3 (6.6)	Leafy	0.1-1 (3)	Pale or Dark, pers	pube	4-10	2
Sho	glauca var. villosa	coe	(2)3-4(6.5)	Leafy	0.2-3.5	Dark, pers	pube	5-9	2
	myrtil- lifolia	coe	(1)2-5(8)	Leafy	(0.1) 0.2-1 (2.8)	Dark, pers	glabr	4-6(7)	2
	planifolia	pre or sub	(1)1.5-6.7 (7.0)	None	Sessile to 0.6	Dark, pers	pube	(2.5)5- 6	2
	wolfii	coe	0.8-2(3)	None or leafy	Subs to 1.2	Dark, pers	glabr	3-5	2
sdr	arctica var. petraea	coe	(0.7)1-5.5 (7)	Leafy	(0.2) <b>1-</b> 4 (5.5)	Dark, pers	pube	3-6 (7)	2
Shn	casca- densis	coe	0.6-2.6 (3)	Leafy	0.1-2	Dark, pers	pube	3-5	2
eping	reticulata var. nana	sero	0.5-2(3)	None	0.2-2.0	Dark, pers	pube	1.5-4	2
Cre	reticulata var. reticulata	sero	(0.5)1.5- 4(6)	None	(0.4) 0.9-4.0 (6)	Pale or Dark, pers	pube	3.5-5	2

\*purpurea stamen filaments are united, appearing as one.

† eriocephala ssp. eriocephala. †† eriocephala ssp. mackenzieana.



### Common Name(s): Strapleaf Willow.

### Identifying Features:

<b>3) SPECIES DESCRIPTIONS</b>	<ul> <li>Current growth twigs and branches reddish or reddish brown</li> <li>Leaves strap-shaped, over 5 times long as wide, blueish green</li> <li>Catkins mostly coetaneous, floral bracts light brown, styles 0.1-0.7 mm long</li> <li>Common, montane</li> </ul>				
Species Descriptions Section 2 – Tall Shrubs	Similar Species: Salix monticola has thicker textured leaves, often broader, sometimes yellowish branches, and longer styles; var. watsonii has yellowish or greenish branches				
Salix eriocephala Michx. ssp. mackenzieana (Hook.) Dorn var. ligulifolia (C.R. Ball) Dorn Description	and usually longer stipes. Habitat: Stream banks, shores, wetlands, 5,300-9,200 ft. (1,600-2,800 m) in elevation				
Ackerfield: Salix ligulifolia (C.R.Ball) C. R. Ball ex C.K.Schneid. Kew: Salix ligulifolia (C.R.Ball) C.R.Ball ex C.K.Schneid	(rounded to the nearest 100 ft./m). Tends to form dense thickets, especially with Salix monticola.				
Dorn: Salix eriocephala Michaux ssp.USDA: Salix lignificita (C.R.Ball) C. R. Ball ex C.K.Schneid SALImackenzieana (Hook.) Dorn var. ligulifoliaex C.K.Schneid SALI	Size: Tall shrub to 6 m (20 ft.) high.				
(C.R. Ball) Dorn. Weber: Salix ligulifolia C.R. Ball FNA: Salix ligulifolia (C.R.Ball) C.R.Ball ex C.K.Schneid	Mature leaves: Glaucous underneath, lanceolate to elliptic or occasionally oblong. Petioles 3-12 mm long, convex to flat or shallowly grooved, glabrous, pilose, or velvety to glabrescent adaxially (top side). Leaf blades 5-10 cm long x 1-2.5 cm wide. Margins serrulate to entire. Surfaces glabrous or glabrate				
Greek erion for "wool" and cephale for "head," with a wooly head. "Wooly head" refers to the catkin rachis, which can be covered in dense, curly hairs." Mackenzie in honor of	Stipules: Foliaceous, apex rounded, convex, acute, or acuminate.				
Alexander Mackenzie (1755?-1820), Scotch fur trader and explorer in Canada, who discovered the Mackenzie River, where he collected the type specimen for this subspecies. Latin <i>liguli</i> a "small, tongue shaped strap" and <i>folia</i> for "leaf," meaning	Twigs: Year-old branches mostly reddish or reddish-brown, current growth often red on one side and green on the other.				
narrow, strap-shaped leaves (Borror 1971, USDA PLANTS DB 2023, Allred 2020).	<b>Catkins</b> : Mostly coetaneous (appearing with the leaves), rarely subprecocious (appearing just before the leaves), 2-6 cm long, peduncles 0-0.9 cm long, leafy when present. Capsules glabrous, 3.5-6 mm long, styles 0.1-0.7 mm, and stipes 0.5-2 (2.5) mm long. Stamens 2 per flower, filaments distinct, glabrous or hairy basally, or often connate (attached) to above the middle, sometimes for their entire length. Floral bracts black or brown, persistent, with very curly hairs, especially toward the base, catkin axis can be obscured by dense, wooly hairs.				

## SPECIES DESCRIPTION CONT'D

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Winter ID: Tall shrub, as wide at bases as upper canopy, twigs reddish-brown to yellowbrown to greenish-brown, leaves strap-shaped – the middle section has parallel edges.

**CO Literature Synonyms:** Salix ligulifolia C.R. Ball (Weber & Wittmann 2012a & b, 1990a & b, 1996a & b, 1987a & b, Weber 1967, 1972, 1976). Salix ligulifolia (C. R. Ball) C.R. Ball ex C. K. Schneider (Argus 2010, Culver & Lemly 2013, Carter 2006). Salix lutea var. *ligulifolia* C.R. Ball (Harrington 1954). Salix lutea Nutt. (Weber 1953). Salix cordata Muhl. a valid eastern species, misapplied to Salix eriocephala var. ligulifolia specimens (Porter & Coulter 1874).

Notes: The species *eriocephala* was described in 1803 by Francois André Michaux, the subspecies *mackenzieana* in 1838 by William Jackson Hooker, the variety *ligulifolia* in 1921 by Carleton Roy Ball, and the newly combined subspecies *mackenzieana* with variety *ligulifolia* by Dorn in 1995. The type specimen of *ligulifolia* is from Apache County, northeastern Arizona. The distribution is in the four corner states, sneaking into southern Wyoming, with two disjunct populations along the Sierra Nevada foothills of California and southern Oregon.

Dorn (2003) notes that glaucousness on the underside of leaves can be absent when plants are grown under the right environmental conditions, that is, under shade (which is rather unusual conditions for willows) and does not mean necessarily genetic crossing. This was shown with an experiment with six Colorado species where Salix amygdaloides, Salix fragilis, and Salix planifolia leaves abandoned glaucousness altogether when grown in shade, and Salix monticola, Salix ligulifolia and Salix brachycarpa leaves grew a weaker glaucousness while in shade (Dorn 2003).

Can have "pine-cone" galls, which are egg-shaped and scaly, about 2-2.5 cm long, and are produced by the willow cone gall midge, *Rhabdophaga strobiloides* (Cranshaw 2010). This species of midge apparently uses a variety of native willows in Colorado.

## MAPS









Species Descriptions Section 2 - Tall Shrubs



## PHOTOS

Figure 39. Salix eriocephala ssp. mackenzieana var. ligulifolia, Strapleaf Willow

(a) Habit- tall shrub, as wide at top as at base, in winter.

(b) Female catkins, with styles <0.7 mm long.

(c) Leaves have parallel sides with acute tips, "strap-shaped".

(d) Leaves are blueish green. Upper surface of leaves dark, underneath surface is glaucous.



Species Descriptions Section 2 - Tall Shrubs



Figure 40. Salix eriocephala var. ligulifolia in winter.

(a.) Tall shrub, as wide at base as upper canopy.

(b.) Terminal twigs reddish and prior year's twigs greenish yellow.

(c.) Reddish twigs.





# WHO NAMED OUR WILLOWS?

### **Botanical Authorship Nomenclatural Rules**

Rules for authorship

### **Mini Biographies**

### Appendix A. cont'd.

- Nils Johan Andersson (1821-1880), a Swedish botanist and traveler. Andersson sailed around the world on the frigate HSwMS (His Swedish Majesty's Ship) Eugenie, 1851-1853, the first Swedish circumnavigation of the globe. Later he was appointed Professor of Botany at Lund University and was director of the Botanical Department of the Swedish Museum of Natural History and the Botanical Garden of Stockholm. His special interests were Salix, Cyperaceae, and Gramineae. He named five Colorado willow taxa: Geyer willow (Salix geyeriana Anderss.), Dewy willow (Salix irrorata Anderss.), Gray willow (Salix glauca L. var. villosa Anderss.), Blueberry Willow (Salix myrtillifolia var. myrtillifolia Anderss.) (Andersson authored both the species and variety), and Snow willow (Salix reticulata L. var. nana Anderss.).
- Irving Widmer Bailey (1884-1967), an American botanist known for his work on plant anatomy. He originally described Autumn willow (Salix serissima (Bailey) Fernald), during his freshman year at Harvard University.





# THE 7 ADJOINING STATES (APPENDIX B) AZ, KS, NE, NM, OK,UT, & WY

Neighboring State	# Salix taxa for that State	# Shared w/ CO	% Similarity w/ C0*	Neighboring State Willow (Salix) Taxa Not Found in Colorado. Name by Dorn 2010, FNA name (Argus 2010) in parenthesis, if different, & common name.
Arizona	20	16	36%	Salix bonplandiana Kunth, Bonpland willow
				Salix bonplandiana var. laevigata (Bebb) Dorn (Salix laevigata Bebb), Red willow Salix exilifolia Dorn (Salix taxifolia Kunth), Yewleaf willow Salix lasiolepis Benth., Arroyo willow
Kansas	14	10	23%	Salix caroliniana Michx., Carolina willow
				Salix eriocephala Michx. ssp. eriocephala var. eriocephala, (Salix eriocephala Michx.), Missouri River willow Salix humilis var. humilis Arbust., Prairie willow Salix humilis var. tristis (Ait.) Griggs, Dwarf prairie willow



# INDEXES

## Index to Scientific Names Including all synonyms

### Index to Common names

ndex of Scientific Names	
Bold numbers indicate photos. Names in /	ALLCAPS are synonyms.
Populus	
angustifolia	
Salix	
alba	
amygdaloides	14, 36, 37, 40, 44, 53, 102, 105, 107, 108
arctica	
arctica var. petraea	
arizonica	6, 41, <b>54,</b> 196, <b>198</b>
babylonica	
barclayi	
barrattiana	
bebbiana	
bonplandiana	
bonplandiana var. laevigata	
boothii	
brachycarpa var. brachycarpa	
calcicola	
CALCICOLA VAR. GLANDULOSIOR	

## **GLOSSARY, REFERENCES**

Glossary	
Term	Definitions mostly based on Dorn 1997 and Harris & Harris 1997.
Acuminate	Generally tapering to a sharp point and forming concave sides along
	the tip. Short acuminate = 1-2 cm, long acuminate =>2 cm
Acute	Tapering to a pointed apex with more or less straight sides
Abaxial	Side facing away from the central axis (or stem), lower, underneath side.
Adaxial	Side facing the central axis (or stem), top or upper side of a leaf, petiole, or floral bract)
Alternate	Leaves borne singly at a node, one leaf at a time at any one node (compare with <b>opposite</b> )
Appressed	Hairs laying down flat, pressed close or flat against leaf surface
Attenuate	Tapering gradually to a narrow tip or base
Blade	Flat, expanded portion of the leaf
Below	Lower or underneath surface, abaxial side of a leaf, facing away from the stem
Branchlet	Small branch
Bud Scales	Modified leaves covering a bud. Willows have just a single scale, cottonwoods have multiple scales.
Caducous	Falling off very early compared to similar structures.
Capsule	Dry fruit developed from the ovary of willow flower, where seeds develop

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