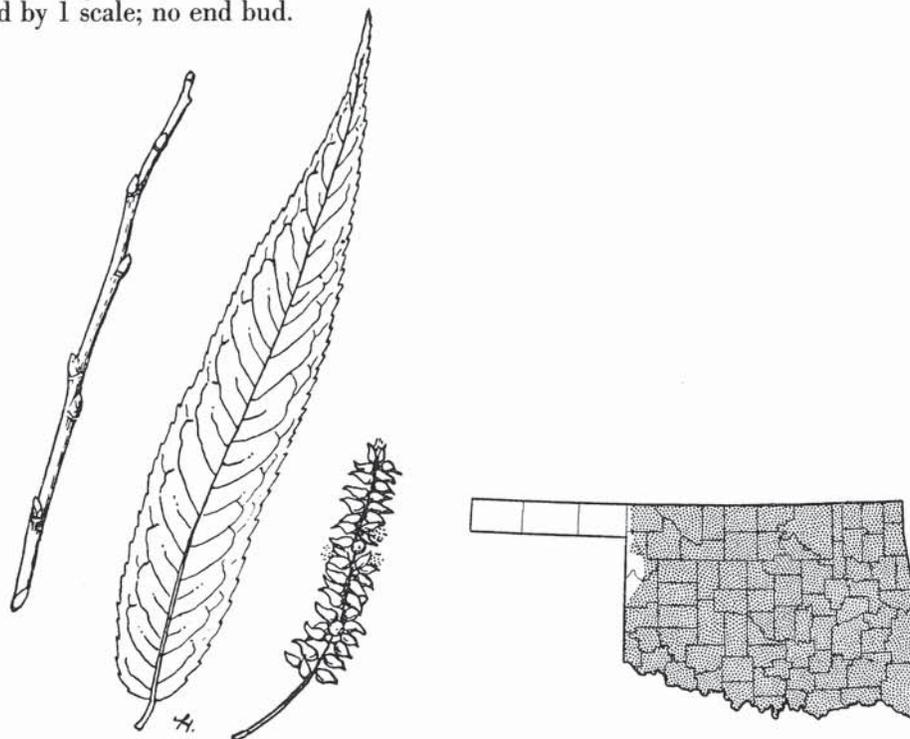


## 19. BLACK WILLOW

*Salix nigra* Marsh.

Medium-sized tree 50 ft (15 m) high with 1 or more straight trunks 1 ft (0.3 m) in diameter, often leaning, and irregular narrow to spreading crown of upright branches. Twigs very slender, green, yellow, or brown, hairless, easily detached at base. Buds tiny, brown, covered by 1 scale; no end bud.



Leaves narrowly lance-shaped, 3-5 in (7.5-13 cm) long,  $\frac{3}{8}$ - $\frac{3}{4}$  in (1-2 cm) wide, often slightly curved to side, long-pointed, finely saw-toothed, hairless or nearly so, shiny green above, paler green beneath, with slender leafstalk, turning yellow in autumn.

Flowers in narrow catkins at end of leafy twigs, 1-3 in (2.5-7.5 cm) long, many, tiny, with yellow hairy scales, male and female on different trees, in early spring with leaves.

Seed capsules many, conical,  $\frac{3}{16}$  in (5 mm) long, hairless, with many cottony seeds, in spring.

Bark dark brown or blackish, deeply furrowed into scaly forking ridges.

Wood gray brown or light reddish brown, frequently with dark streaks, with thin whitish or light yellow sapwood, diffuse porous, lightweight (sp. gr. .36), moderately soft, with low strength. Principal uses are millwork, furniture, doors, cabinetwork, toys, signs, boxes, barrels, woodenware, artificial limbs, wood carvings, and pulpwood. Willow wood formerly was a source of charcoal for gunpowder.

Common and often dominant, especially with cottonwood, sycamore, and river birch, flood plain and valley forests, wet soil bordering streams and lakes, throughout Okla. except c. and w. panhandle. Widespread in e. and sw. U.S. and adjacent Canada and Mexico. Zone 2.

Black willow is the largest native willow and the most widespread of the tree species. It reaches commercial timber size in the Lower Mississippi Valley, where willow mats and poles protect banks and levees. Large trees prevent soil erosion and flood damage. A shade tree and honey plant.