

Bebb's willow (*Salix bebbiana*)

Family: Willow (*Salicaceae*)

DESCRIPTION: An abundant, fast-growing native shrub that reaches 10 feet tall and adapts to nearly any soil type, Bebb's willow makes an effective shoreline stabilizer. Commonly found in swamps, meadows, marshes and fens, and along lakeshores and streambanks, it's easily propagated.

USES: An effective colonizer, the species is ideal for riparian buffers and streambank erosion control. Snowshoe hares, deer, elk and moose browse on the shrub; its buds, shoots and catkins feed small mammals and birds. The wood is made into furniture, baskets, canes and baseball bats.

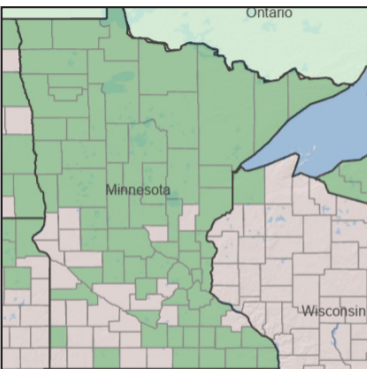
REFERENCES:

Trees and Shrubs of Minnesota;
Welby R. Smith

**Native Trees, Shrubs, and Vines for
Urban and Rural America;**
Gary L. Hightshoe

**Wetland Plants and Plant Communities
of Minnesota and Wisconsin;**
Steve D. Eggers, Donald M. Reed

[USDA Plants Database](#)



Range Map Credit: NRCS Plants
Database



**STATEWIDE
WETLAND
INDICATOR
STATUS:**
FACW

ID: Upright, leggy stems and yellow-green, stiff catkins distinguish the bushy shrub, which grows up to 10 feet tall. Hairy, greenish branches turn red-brown with age. Hairy and toothed, the simple, oblong leaves grow 1 to 3 inches long, arranged alternately. Flowers are produced in the catkins, which emerge just before the leaves in March and April. Each shrub bears either male or female catkins. Wind disperses seeds mid-May to early July.

Planting Recommendations

Bebb's willow can be propagated by 24- to 48-inch-long branch cuttings harvested in late winter or early spring before leaves develop. It's most common to push the cuttings several inches into soils that will stay moist into summer. Success rates are much lower in soils with low moisture levels. Placing cuttings in buckets of water in early spring lets roots grow before planting. Bebb's willow also is available as bare-root or containerized plants. Bare-root plants should be installed in early spring before

leaves develop. It's important to prevent roots from drying out at any point in the planting process. Containerized plants provide more flexibility in when to plant — with enough water, this species can be planted during the summer. Establishment from seed is less common. From late fall through early spring, seed can be spread onto moist soils with little weed competition. Lightly mulching with straw or with the stems of native plants can help retain moisture as seedlings germinate and grow.

SIMILAR SPECIES: Hairy leaves distinguish it from the smooth-leaved pussy willows (*Salix discolor*), which are shrubs similar in shape and size.