

October 2023 Plant of the Month



Salix nigra Marsh, Black Willow

The October *Plant of the Month* is the native tree, black willow. *Salix nigra* is a facultative wetland species with an affinity to rich alluvial soils associated with rivers and stream, pond edges and lakesides. The tree is a native to North America, and present east of the Great Plains. It has a statewide New Jersey distribution, and is represented in every New Jersey county. The photo above is from a lake shore in Alloway, Salem County.

Black willow is a large shrub or small tree with flaky brown bark, brittle branches. It is distinguished from other New Jersey's other 18 or so species of willows by its leaf shape and larger stature, reaching 20 meters when mature.

Black willow has been used by Native Americans for medicine and fiber. Decoctions made from the bark and roots were used for dermatological applications. It was used to treat fevers and coughs (Moerman, 1998). Recently, it has been used for commercial charcoal (Hough, 1983).

JRA, 10/2023