# Salix sericea

## silky willow

Salicaceae

Native

WIS Code **OBL** 

#### **DESCRIPTION**

Shrub to 4 m tall with brittle branches and purplish velvety twigs. Leaves are alternate, narrowly lance-like (2 to 14 cm long; 1 to 3 cm wide), gradually tapering to a pointed tip, and with finely toothed margins. Leaf surfaces are dark green and slightly hairy to smooth above, and whitish (glaucous) with silky dense hairs below. Leaf stalks (petioles) are 2 to 13 mm long, and bracts (stipules) at the base of petioles are very small or absent.

### **FLOWERS AND FRUITS**

March through April. Flower heads appear in the spring before the leaves, with male and female flowers clustered on spikes (catkins) on separate plants. Male catkins are 1 to 2 cm and female to 4 cm. Fruits are capsules 3 to 5 mm.

### **HABITAT**

Swamps, bogs, fens, seeps, and stream banks.

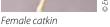
#### SIMILAR SPECIES

Salix nigra, black willow, a shrub or tree (5 to 25 m tall) has green to brown (not purple) twigs, the leaves are smooth on both sides and some have large stipules. Salix caroliniana, coastal plain willow, also has whitish (glaucous) lower leaf surfaces, but the leaves are hairy with conspicuous persistent stipules. The flowers appear along with the leaves (not before).











Male catkin