

BLACK WILLOW

Salix nigra Marsh.

OTHER COMMON NAMES: Swamp willow, Crack willow.

FORM: Usually 30-40 feet high, with a diameter 10-20 inches, may reach a height of 120 feet, often with several medium sized trunks; thick spreading upright branches forming a broad somewhat open irregular head.

BARK: 1-1 1/4 inch thick, dark brown or nearly black, deeply divided into broad flat connected ridges, separating freely into plate-like scales, becomes shaggy on old trunks.

TWIGS: Pubescent when they first appear, soon glabrous, becoming reddish-brown to orange-colored, slender, drooping, easily separated at the joints.

LEAVES: Alternate, simple, lanceolate, long acuminate, often falcate, cuneate or rounded at base, finely serrate, thin, bright light green above, paler below.

FLOWERS: Appear before the leaves, dioecious, terminal, on short branchlets, borne in the axils of yellow, rounded scales; both staminate and pistillate flowers borne in drooping aments 1-3 inches long.

FRUIT: An ovoid-conic, reddish-brown capsule about 1/8 inch long, opening by 2 sutures at maturity to set free the minute seeds covered with tufts of fine long hairs.

WINTER BUDS: Terminal bud absent, lateral buds 1-scaled, acute, reddish-brown, about 1/16 inch long.

WOOD: Light, soft, weak, fine-grained, pale reddish-brown with nearly white sapwood.

USES: Pulp, cheap furniture, soil erosion. Historical uses: artificial limbs, excelsior, berry boxes, crates.

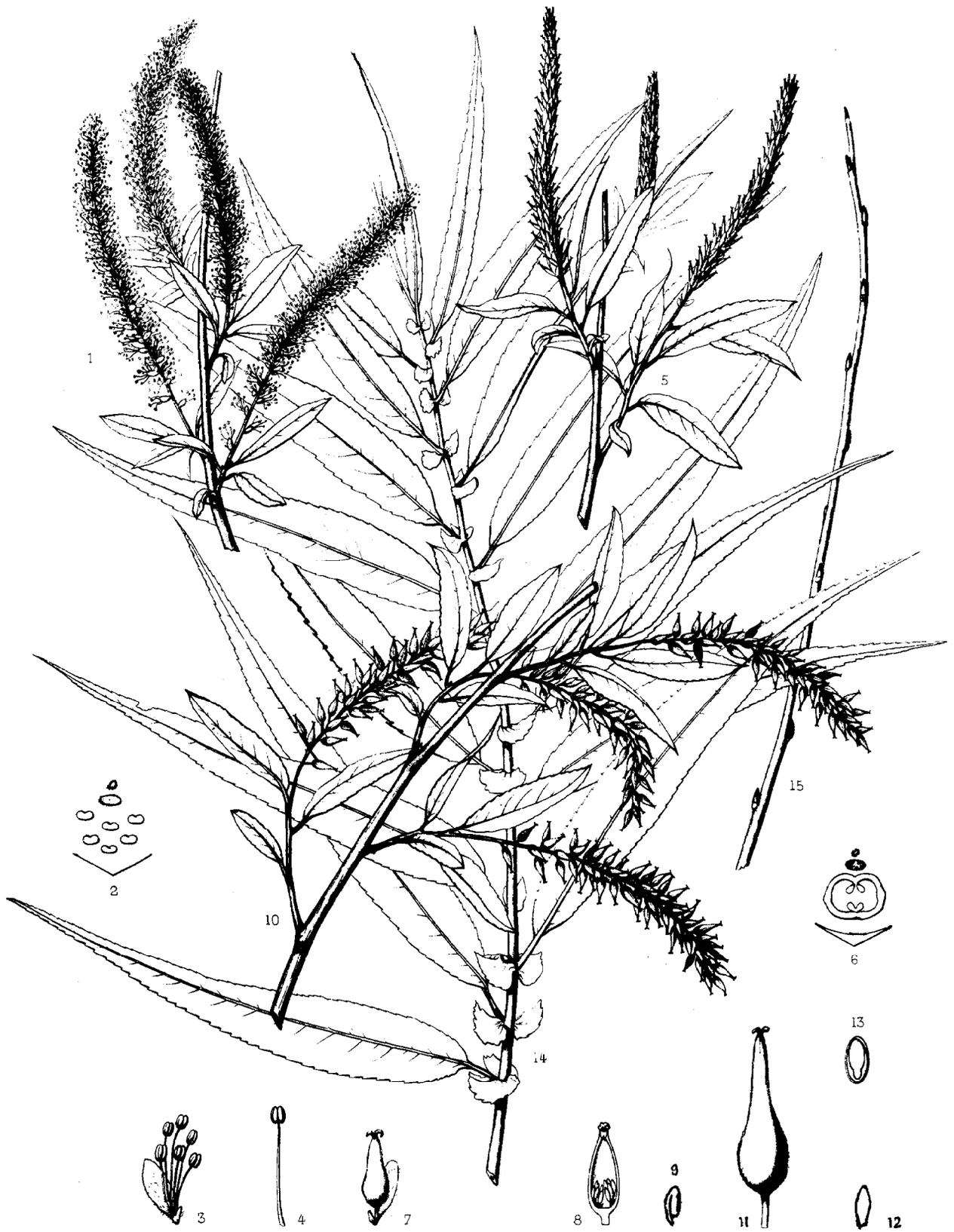
HABITAT: Wet sites along streams, shores of lakes, flat swampy areas.

DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS: Largest of our native willows; rough, thick-scaled, blackish-brown bark; narrowly lanceolate short petioled leaves; twigs easily separated at the joints.

DISTRIBUTION IN ALABAMA: Apparently grows in every county in the state.

EXPLANATION OF PLATE

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| 1. A flowering branch of the staminate tree | 8. Vertical section of a pistil |
| 2. Diagram of a staminate flower | 9. An ovule |
| 3. A staminate flower with its scale, front view | 10. A fruiting branch |
| 4. A stamen | 11. A capsule |
| 5. A flowering branch of the pistillate tree | 12. A seed |
| 6. Diagram of a pistillate flower | 13. Vertical section of a seed |
| 7. A pistillate flower with its scale, front view | 14. A summer branch |
| | 15. A winter branch |



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