

FLORIDA WILLOW

Salix floridana Chapman

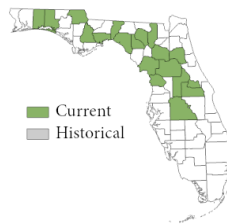
Synonyms: *Salix chapmanii* Small; *Salix astatulana* Murrill & E.J. Palmer

Family: Salicaceae (willow)

FNAI Ranks: G2G3/S2S3

Legal Status: US-none FL-Endangered

Wetland Status: US-FACW++ FL-OBL



Alan Cressler, Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center



Brenda Herring

Field Description: **Shrub** or small **tree**. The **stems** are spindly, 3 to 6 m tall, with gray bark and reddish-brown twigs. The **leaves** are deciduous, alternate, and have petioles 1.5-2.5 cm long. The broadly lanceolate leaf blades range from 5-16 cm long and 2-5 cm wide. The leaves have glandular serrate margins and are bright green above and grayish-white below. Leaves on young shoots have conspicuous, semicircular stipules. Male and female **flowers** are found on separate plants, arranged in catkins that are 3-8 cm long. The **fruit** is a tiny two-valved capsule clustered in the 2-2.5 cm diameter mature catkin. The **seeds** are minute and bear numerous silky hairs.

Similar Species: Six species of *Salix* are known to occur in Florida. Carolina willow (*Salix caroliniana*), a sturdy tree to 30 feet tall, has linear leaves up to 8 inches long and only 1.2 inches wide, grayish-blue beneath, stipules sometimes present; fruiting

catkins less than 0.7 inch in diameter. Florida willow has larger fruiting catkins and wider, more oblong leaves.

Related Rare Species: Heart-leaved willow (*Salix eriocephala*), state-endangered, is found in 3 counties in the Panhandle.

Habitat: Wet, mucky soils in bottomland forests, floodplains, hydric hammocks, swamps, edges of spring-runs and streams. Species associates may include *Fraxinus pennsylvanica*, *Ilex cassine* var. *cassine*, *Morella cerifera*, *Acer rubrum*, *Magnolia virginiana*, *Chamaecyparis thyhyoides*, *Taxodium ascendens*, *Mikania scandens*, *Cicuta maculata*, and *Crinum americanum*. Habitats in which it occurs are close canopied forests with a variable assemblage of tree species, often deciduous, capable of withstanding inundated conditions with hydric soils and containing often sparse, flood-tolerant groundcover where small openings exist. The understory can be anywhere from open to a dense mix of shrub and sapling species.

Best Survey Season: Spring; February - April, fruits March - April. Leaves and fruits are both useful for positive identification.

Range-wide Distribution: Florida willow is known from central Florida to south Georgia and Alabama. Lake and Orange counties represent the southernmost Florida populations with the northern-most in Jackson County.

Conservation Status: There are 34 known occurrences in Florida, with close to half occurring in conservation areas. This species is threatened by habitat destruction through changes in water level; clearing of ditches, sedimentation and pollution to springs and streams; clearcutting and draining floodplains and wet hammocks; and conversion to pine plantation.

Protection and Management: Protect springs and spring runs from pollution, sedimentation, and hydrologic changes. Protect floodplains and wet hammocks from clearcutting and draining. Limit access to maintain quality of site and protect upstream creek and floodplain from disturbances.

References: Argus 1986, Chafin 2000, Coile 2000, FNA 2010, Godfrey 1988, Herring and Schultz 2003, Nelson 1996, Patrick et al. 1995, Ward 1979, Wunderlin and Hansen 2011, Wunderlin et al. 2018.