black willow

Salix nigra

Kingdom: Plantae
Division/Phylum: Anthophyta - flowering plants

Features

The black willow tree may grow to 90 feet tall. Its bark is rough and furrowed. The simple leaves are arranged alternately along the branches. They are lance-shaped, finely toothed, up to six inches long, deep green above, and paler on the lower surface. Flowers are in long, slender spikes with male and female flowers on separate spikes. The fruits are in flask-shaped, reddish-brown capsules that are up to one-fifth inch long.

Natural History

The black willow grows along streams, marshes, and around lakes and ponds. It flowers from April through May. The reddish-brown wood of this tree is used for making charcoal, boxes, crates, and baskets. Historically, willows were used for relieving pain and reducing fevers. It is infrequent in the northwest and extreme eastern part of the state and common elsewhere.

Habitats

Mississippi River; Missouri River; bottomland forests; interior rivers and streams; natural lakes and prairie marshes; constructed lakes, ponds, and reservoirs

Iowa Status

common; native

Iowa Range

statewide

Bibliography

Iowa Department of Natural Resources. 2001. *Biodiversity of Iowa: Aquatic Habitats* CD-ROM.