PLANT FACT SHEET

Salix alba L.

GENUS *Salix* **FAMILY** Salicaceae

COMMON NAMES White willow, European willow

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: bark, Leaves - tea, Flowers, Leaves, Gum

The young leaves are used as food in times of scarcity.
The leaves are also used for a tea like drink.
The inner bark is dried and powdered then used for bread. (It is very bitter unless dried)
The gum exudate is chewed for its sweetness.

DESCRIPTION

A shapely deciduous tree. It often has 1-4 trunks and an open crown of spreading branches. It grows up to 20-25 m tall and 9-12 m wide. The leaves are silvery but blue-green and silky underneath. They are alternate and on short stalks. The leaves are 5-7 times as long as wide. The leaves have fine teeth. The male flowers are yellow catkins. The female flowers are green catkins. The seeds are fluffy. They are blown by the wind.

HABITAT

It is a temperate plant. It is native to W. Asia and Europe. It grows along riversides and in meadows by water. It is frost hardy. It grows in damp soil. In Argentina it grows below 500 m above sea level. It suits hardiness zones 2-10. Arboretum Tasmania.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants can be grown by seed or cuttings.

NOTES

There are about 300 Salix species.

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