

Meadow willow (*Salix petiolaris*)

Pennsylvania Plant Species of Concern

State Rank: S4 (apparently secure), Global Rank: G5 (secure)

What it looks like:

Meadow willow, *Salix petiolaris*, is a bushy perennial shrub or small tree with slender, yellowish to dark brown twigs.

Leaves are lance-shaped and dark green, edged with very small teeth, about 4 to 10 centimeters long by 0.8 to 2 centimeters wide.

Flowers are small and without petals, borne in dense, fluffy-looking spikes called catkins, which grow 1 to 3.5 centimeters long.



USDA-NRCS PLANTS Database - from *Illustrated flora of the northern states and Canada*. (Britton, N.L., and A. Brown, 1913. Vol. 3: 109.)

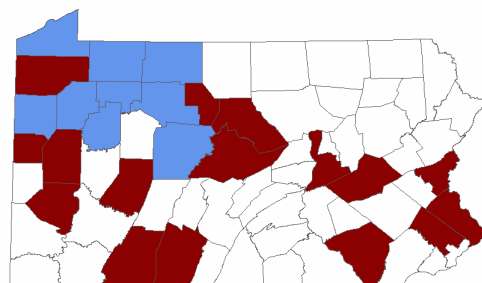
Where it is found:

Meadow willow grows in wet meadows, fens, along streams and lakeshores, and in forest clearings – in moist conditions with direct sunlight. Within this broad habitat type, meadow willow will grow in a variety of soil conditions; it is associated with disturbed or successional habitat. It is found as far north as Québec and the Northwest Territories, and south into Pennsylvania, Kentucky, and Oklahoma.

Why it is rare:

Though meadow willow is secure in the northern parts of its range, it is ranked as critically imperiled or possibly extirpated in many U.S. states along the southern edge of the range.

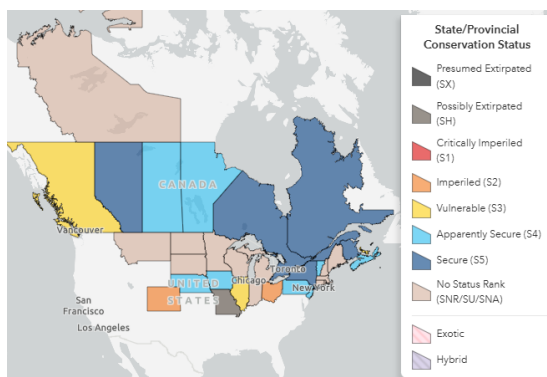
Meadow Willow (*Salix petiolaris*)



■ <25 years ■ >25 years

North American State/Province Conservation Status

Map by NatureServe 2025



Conservation considerations:

Preservation of meadow willow's wetland habitat will be vitally important to restoring its population in Pennsylvania. Control of woody exotic plants like multiflora rose and bush honeysuckle species will also be beneficial, since these plants may out-compete meadow willow in open, successional areas.

References

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