



United States Department of Agriculture

# 'Greenbank' Sandbar Willow *Salix interior* Rowlee

A Conservation Plant Release by USDA NRCS Big Flats Plant Materials Center, Corning, New York



'Greenbank' sandbar willow branch and flower. Photo taken at the USDA NRCS Big Flats Plant Materials Center, Corning, New York

**Alternate Scientific Names:** *Salix exigua* Nutt.

Greenbank sandbar willow (*Salix interior* Rowlee) is a cultivar cooperatively released by the Natural Resources Conservation Service, University of Toronto, and the State University of New York College of Environmental Science and Forestry.

### Description

Greenbank is a native deciduous shrub that grows up to 16 feet in height and is known for its ability to form thickets by producing many root suckers. It grows in colonies with many stems, spreading by underground stolons. It is tall and bushy, with strong side branches and flowers from early May to late June.

Branchlets are slender, reddish-brown, and smooth or nearly so. Bark of older stems is brown to grayish. Leaves are alternate, simple, 2-5 inches long and are green and glabrous above, and paler and sparsely hairy or glabrous beneath. The leaf margins are serrated and widely spaced.

### Source

Greenbank is a male clone of a hybrid, derived from a cross between accessions PI #591338 (INT-61) and #9051648 (INT-63), selected by the Forest Genetics Laboratory, University of Toronto. INT-61 was found by Duffins Creek in Ajax, Ontario, on a delta and floodplain zone and INT-63 was collected from Green River, Ontario, a wide floodplain with a wet meadow.

It was selected at the Big Flats Plant Materials Center, from a 22-clone collection obtained from the State University of New York, College of Environmental Science and Forestry, which included the University of Toronto accessions. The parent clones were collected from native stands just north of Lake Ontario. It was selected due to its superior plant vigor, thick stems and suckering ability. As a male clone, it will not spread by seed.

### Conservation Uses

The principal uses for Greenbank are streambank and shoreline protection, riparian area development, restoration and fish habitat. It is also useful in streamside buffer systems for water quality improvement.

Used in combination with 'Streamco' purpleosier willow and 'Bankers' dwarf willow, Greenbank provides diversity and insect and disease resistance. It should not be planted where its spreading habit will be a nuisance.

### Area of Adaptation and Use

Greenbank is adapted to the northeastern United States on river and stream shorelines, flood plains, alluvial flats, lakeshores, sandy beaches and other riparian areas in plant hardiness zones 4 to 6.

### Establishment and Management for Conservation Plantings

Greenbank sandbar willow will perform well when planted as rooted cuttings, or when used in bioengineering systems as unrooted whips or stems. It does not require rooting hormones, on most sites, to survive. It can spread off the streambank to other sites under favorable conditions.

Greenbank is propagated by vegetative methods. Hardwood cuttings, approximately 9-12 inches are usually made in mid-February but can be cut in late fall, or anytime when the plant is dormant. If cuttings are made before planting, plants are to be stored in a plant cooler until they are planted in mid-May.

The hardwood cuttings of Greenbank should be used where moisture conditions are good. On droughty sites, rooted cuttings are preferred. Once planted, it requires little care.

### Ecological Considerations

Greenbank is a very aggressive spreader. This is important when selecting materials for a given site. It can spread off the streambank to adjacent sites under favorable circumstances.

Program Web site <<http://www.plant-materials.nrcs.usda.gov>>

No major insect or disease problems have been observed although some Japanese beetle feeding occurs.

### **Seed and Plant Production**

Greenbank is a male clone, therefore producing no seed for increased production. It is propagated by vegetative methods when dormant and rooted or unrooted cuttings are planted in the spring, usually early to mid-May. Well-rooted, 1-0 stock will be produced in one growing season.

### **Availability**

*For conservation use:* Rooted and unrooted cuttings are commonly available at commercial nurseries.

*For plant increase:* Nursery owners may obtain propagated material from the Big Flats Plant Materials Center, in Corning, New York to start their cutting block for commercial production.

*For more information, contact:*  
Big Flats Plant Materials Center  
3266 State Route 352  
Corning, New York 14830  
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Or  
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### **Citation**

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