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-none

Leaves oblong to oblong lanceolate with an acute apex. Spring Creek Unit at Big Bend Wildlife Management Area. Photo by Kelly Anderson.

Field Description: Shrub or small **tree.** The **stems** are spindly, 3 - 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 2.0 - 2.5 cm diameter mature catkin. The **seeds** are minute and bear numerous silky hairs.

Similar Species: Six species of willow (*Salix* sp.) are known to occur in Florida. Carolina willow (*Salix caroliniana*), a sturdy tree to 9 m tall, has linear leaves up to 20.3 cm long and only 3 cm wide, grayish-blue beneath; stipules sometimes present; fruiting catkins less than 1.8 cm 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 and is differentiated as a large shrub or small tree (6 m tall) with bud apex blunt or rounded; bud scale margins fused, thus individual scale margins are not distinct or overlapping; leaf blades 2.5 - 3.0 times as long as wide; pale green or glaucous beneath with leaf margins serrate, serrulate, denticulate, or remotely spinulose-serrulate; stamens usually 2.

Habitat: Wet, mucky soils in bottomland forests, floodplains, hydric hammocks, swamps, edges of spring-runs and streams. Habitats in which it occurs are closed 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: Summer-fall; May - October, fruits March - April (May). Leaves and fruits are both useful for positive identification.

Range-wide Distribution: Central GA and southern AL (north to Butler County) south to central peninsular and Panhandle FL.

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, pollution to springs and streams, clearcutting, draining floodplains and wet hammocks, and conversion to pine plantation.

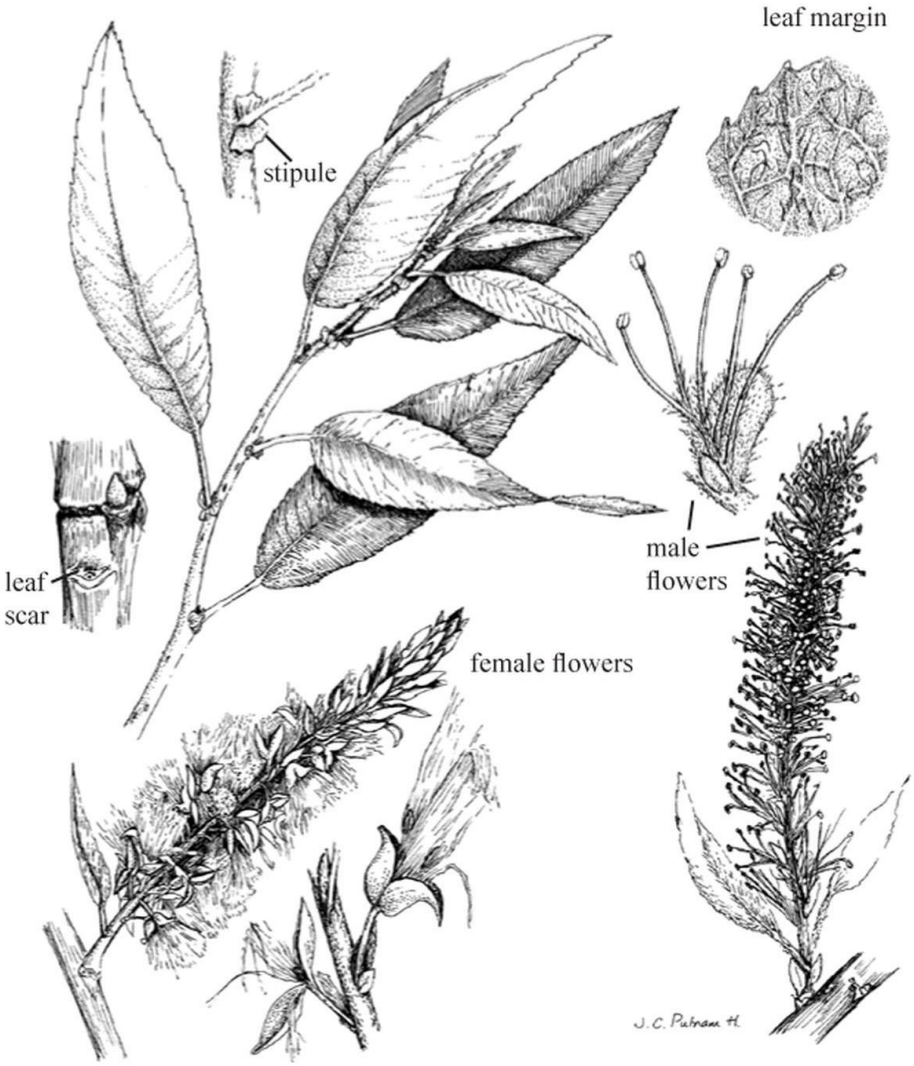
Protection and Management: Protect springs and spring runs from pollution, sedimentation, and hydrologic changes. Protect floodplains and wet hammocks from clearcutting and draining. Limit access to maintain quality of site and protect upstream creek and floodplain from disturbances.

References: Argus 1986, Diamond 2013, Weakley, A. S. and the Southeastern Flora Team 2024, Wunderlin and Hansen 2011.

Petioles sometimes reddish. Spring Creek Unit at Big Bend Wildlife Management Area. Photo by Kelly Anderson.

Mature fruit reddish-brown with many small wind dispersed seeds. Spring Creek Unit at Big Bend Wildlife Management Area. Photo by Kelly Anderson.

Growing in floodplain swamp along spring-run stream at Aucilla Wildlife Management Area. Photo by Kelly Anderson.


leaf margin
stipule
leaf
scar
male
flowers
female flowers
J.C. Putnam H.