

Salix cinerea

COMMON NAMES

grey willow, pussy willow

BIOSTATUS

Exotic

CATEGORY

Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Trees & Shrubs - Dicotyledons

SIMPLIFIED DESCRIPTION

Deciduous shrub or small tree up to 7 m tall, many branched forming dense thickets with grey or green-grey bark, leaves up to 7 x 3.5 cm, pale green on upper surface, grey below, flowers of two types produced in spring before the leaves on separate plants, the males being silky hairy catkins, often yellow due to pollen production, the female catkins being longer and silvery green.

FLOWER COLOURS

Green, Yellow

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Shrub or small tree to approx. 7m high, often only 1~2m, spreading or often forming dense thickets; bark rather smooth. Shoots not brittle; grey or greenish-grey and remaining hairy, or reddish to dark purple and often becoming glabrous or glabrate, generally with pale brown markings and striations prominent below surface for around 2 years. Buds reddish, glabrate or hairy. Petiole to about 1cm long on adult shoots, but often very short and hairy. Lamina 2~7 x 1.5~3.5cm, often smaller at base of lateral shoots, generally obovate, sometimes elliptic, not bitter to taste; grey or glaucous below, generally densely clothed in soft grey hairs, sometimes rather sparsely clothed in harsher reddish-brown hairs, soon glabrous and shining above except for midrib, glandular-serrulate to subentire; angle between midrib and veins $> 45^\circ$; apex rounded to cuspidate. Stipules semi-annular, small, persisting on strong vegetative shoots. Catkins appearing before leaves, 1.5~3.5cm long, broad-cylindric to clindric-ovate, generally erect; rachis villous. Bracts 1.5~3mm long, elliptic to oblong-obovate, black in upper half, sericeous; apex obtuse to rounded. Gland .5~.8mm long, rectangular to almost square. Stamens 2; filaments pilose towards base. Female flowers with pedicels $>$ bracts; ovary white-tomentose, stalked.

SIMILAR TAXA

Leaves are broader than most other common willows, the combination of obovate leaf shape and grey-hairy undersides should distinguish this from all other willows.

DISTRIBUTION

Widespread and locally abundant throughout both islands but rare in the Far North, South Westland and Southland

HABITAT

Swamps, fens, water body margins and disturbed places.

CONSERVATION STATUS

Not applicable



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DETAILED TAXONOMY

FAMILY

Salicaceae

AUTHORITY

Salix cinerea L.

ECOLOGY

FLOWERING

September to October

FRUITING

October to November

YEAR NATURALISED

1925

ORIGIN

Europe, West Asia and North Africa

REASON FOR INTRODUCTION

Ornamental shrub

CONTROL TECHNIQUES

Can be controlled manually, mechanically or herbicidally depending on situation.

LIFE CYCLE AND DISPERSAL

Perennial. shrub. Seed dispersed by wind, water and contaminated machinery.

WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING

FACW: Facultative Wetland

Usually is a hydrophyte but occasionally found in uplands (non-wetlands).

OTHER INFORMATION

ETYMOLOGY

cinerea: Ash-grey

NATIONAL PEST PLANT ACCORD SPECIES

This plant is listed in the 2020 National Pest Plant Accord. The National Pest Plant Accord (NPPA) is an agreement to prevent the sale and/or distribution of specified pest plants where either formal or casual horticultural trade is the most significant way of spreading the plant in New Zealand. For up to date information and an electronic copy of the 2020 Pest Plant Accord manual (including plant information and images) visit the [MPI website](#).

ENVIRONMENTAL WEED (2024)

This plant is named in a list of 386 environmental weeds in New Zealand 2024 prepared by DOC. 759 candidate species were considered for inclusion on this new comprehensive list of environmental weeds in New Zealand. The species considered were drawn from published lists of weed species, lists of plants that must be reported or managed by law if observed, existing national and regional programmes and agreements for pest management, and species already managed by the Department of Conservation (DOC). Candidate species were then assessed to see if they were fully naturalised and whether they have more than minor impacts in natural ecosystems. Read the full report [here](#).

MANAAKI WHENUA ONLINE INTERACTIVE KEY

[Key to willow species and hybrids present in New Zealand](#)

NVS CODE

SALCIN

REFERENCING AND CITATIONS

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Webb, C.J.; Sykes, W.R.; Garnock-Jones, P.J. (1988). Flora of New Zealand Volume 4: Naturalised pteridophytes, gymnosperms, dicotyledons. Botany Division, DSIR, Christchurch.

Popay et al (2010). An illustrated guide to common weeds of New Zealand, third edition. NZ Plant Protection Society Inc, 416pp.

Johnson PN, Brooke PA (1989). Wetland plants in New Zealand. DSIR Field Guide, DSIR Publishing, Wellington. 319pp.

ATTRIBUTION

Factsheet prepared by Paul Champion and Deborah Hofstra (NIWA). Features description from Webb et. al. (1988).

MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/salix-cinerea/>

PDF DATE

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