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Salix humilis

[Synonyms : *Salix tristis*]

PRAIRIE WILLOW is a deciduous shrub. Native to eastern North America it has yellow catkins.

It is also known as Bush willow, Cone willow, Dwarf willow, and Low willow.

Humilis is derived from Latin *humus* (on the ground, low) meaning ‘low-growing’ or lower growing than most of its kind’.

Familiar to some of the North American Indian tribes, a bark decoction or infusion served as a Cherokee hair wash that would encourage growth.

As a source of medicine the Menominee are known to have used the roots (providing the shrub bore evidence of insect galls on its stems) in remedies for diarrhoea, dysentery and wind, and like the Cherokee they also took it as a tonic. Both the Meskwaki and Cherokee tribes valued the shrub as a treatment for diarrhoea too, and the Cherokee used it to ease fever and hoarseness. Leaves were used to stem bleeding by the Meskwaki, and the Delaware tribe prescribed it for tuberculosis and venereal disease.