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Salix nigra

[Synonyms : *Salix ambigua*, *Salix amygdaloides*, *Salix denudata*, *Salix dubia*, *Salix falcata*, *Salix flavovirens*, *Salix ligustrina*, *Salix ludoviciana*, *Salix nigra* var. *altissima*, *Salix nigra* var. *brevifolia*, *Salix nigra* var. *brevijulis*, *Salix nigra* var. *falcata*, *Salix nigra* var. *lindheimeri*, *Salix nigra* var. *longifolia*, *Salix nigra* var. *marginata*, *Salix purshiana*, *Salix vulgare*]

BLACK AMERICAN WILLOW is a deciduous shrub or tree. Native to eastern North America it has yellow catkins.

It is also known as Black willow, Catkins willow, Dudley willow, Goodding willow, Peachleaf willow, Pussy willow, Swamp willow, Southeastern black willow, Tall black willow, *Vrba černá* (Czech), Western black willow, and Willow.

Warning – the leaves can be poisonous for humans and can cause abdominal pain.

Nigra means 'black'.

The twigs provided basketry material for some of the Tohono O'odham North American Indian tribe.

The willow was a source of medicine for some of the North American Indian tribes and they used the bark as a remedy for pain. Houma, Cherokee and Koasati tribes all used it to ease fever, and the Cherokee turned to it for treating diarrhoea and hoarseness, apart from taking it as a tonic. Both the Koasati and Iroquois Indian tribes valued it for neutralising wind, and while the Koasati also took it for headaches the Iroquois used it for oral problems and coughs. Houma Indians used it as a remedy for blood diseases, and the Micmac tribe applied it in poultices to bruises and sprains.

This lightweight, soft wood has been used to make wicker furniture, baskets, artificial limbs, wooden shoes, polo balls, boxes, crates and toys. It has also been used for veneering and carving, and collected for fuel and for making charcoal and pulp.

Medicinally, herbalists have recommended the bark for treating fever. It has also been used to treat some venereal diseases, is reputed to be a sex tonic (an aphrodisiac), and it has been used to treat some nervous disorders, diarrhoea, gangrene, ulcers and worms. Today it is used in homoeopathic treatments.