

United States Department of Agriculture

Soil Conservation Service

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'Bankers' dwarf willow



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'Bankers' dwarf willow is a fast-growing, dense shrub for controlling erosion on streambanks. It is especially well suited for banks of small streams with an average flow velocity of less than 8 feet per second. Excellent plantings have also been established along major rivers. Dwarf willow's low-growing stems interlock and root well in moist soil.

In April 1983, the Soil Conservation Service (SCS) and the University of Kentucky Agricultural Experiment Station jointly released Bankers for commercial production.

Description

Bankers dwarf willow (*Salix X cotteti* Kerner.) is a natural hybrid of *S. retusa* L. and *S. myrsinifolia* Salish. Its mature height and lateral spread are 6 feet or less.

The ability of dwarf willow's prostrate stems to root in moist soil is one of its outstanding characteristics. On a streambank, the plants spread and their rooted stems interlock. The stems are flexible and, in streambank plantings made on 2-foot centers, rarely exceed ½ inch in diameter.

When bent by flowing water, the stems tend to lie in a shingle pattern that deflects debris and protects the soil during high water.

Adaptation

Bankers is climatically adapted throughout the Appalachian region from New York to Alabama (see map).

The native habitat of dwarf willow is the Alpine region of western Europe. Bankers was selected from a collection of 74 willows brought to the SCS Plant Materials Center (PMC) at Quicksand, Ky., in 1967.

Since 1972, test plantings of Bankers have been made on streambanks in the central Appalachian region. Growth characteristics and propagation methods were evaluated in plantings at the Quicksand PMC. Bankers was selected for its high stem density, semiprostrate growth habit, and superior vigor.

Bankers grows well in a wide variety of soils. It is best adapted to wet sites subject to periodic flooding. It is moderately shade tolerant.

Establishment

You can establish Bankers on streambanks from rooted or unrooted cuttings. It does not reproduce or spread by seed. For gravelly streambanks, rooted cuttings are recommended; for nongravelly streambanks, unrooted cuttings may be used.

Plant the cuttings in rows 18 to 30 inches apart. Set the first row about 2 to 3 feet from the normal waterline. Normal planting time is early spring after high water subsides.

If the streambank requires shaping or is bare of herbaceous plants, seed grasses and legumes after planting the willow.

Young cuttings compete well with grass and other native plants that do not exceed 2 feet in height. Plantings of Bankers generally form a solid stand in 2 or 3 years.



An 11-year-old planting of 'Bankers' dwarf willow stabilizes the banks of a small Tennessee stream.

Propagation

Like most willows, Bankers roots readily from hardwood cuttings. Unrooted cuttings planted in the nursery in spring will be ready for transplanting next spring. Annual cuttings can be made from plants 2 years old or more.

Availability

You can purchase cuttings of Bankers dwarf willow from commercial nurseries. Through local soil and water conservation districts, foundation stock is available from the SCS Plant Materials Center in Quicksand, Ky.

For more information on availability, propagation, and use of Bankers dwarf willow, contact the SCS Plant Materials Center (Quicksand KY 41363) or your local Soil Conservation Service office. SCS is listed in most local telephone directories under "U.S. Government, Department of Agriculture."

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