

Barrens Willow

Salix jejuna

STATUS	Not Listed 	Endangered 
Endangered 	Not Listed 	Not Listed 



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Species Description

Barrens Willow is a dwarf (1-2 cm tall), woody shrub. Its trailing branches (10-40 cm long) are reddish-brown and very close to the ground. Its oval leaves have a waxy upper surface, a lighter underside, and edges that are rolled downwards. They also have a shallow-v cross-section, and are boat-like in shape. Individual plants have either male or female catkins (flower clusters), never both.

Endemic to the northern coast of Newfoundland's Great Northern Peninsula; limited to only eight sites along a 25-km stretch.



Habitat

Barrens Willow requires open, sparsely-vegetated limestone barren habitat, which often contains only small patches of low-nutrient soil. This can be natural, undisturbed limestone barrens containing patterned ground (polygons or strips) or degraded limestone barrens such as abandoned quarries and roadways with no patterned ground. Sites are along the coast in wind-swept, exposed areas with low temperatures, limited snow accumulation, and moderate precipitation.



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Thin soil between blocks of limestone



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Barrens Willow's trailing branches

Found from Watts Point to Cape Norman in limestone barrens; easily confused with other willows, but look for a creeping woody shrub, often with downy flower clusters in mid- to late summer.

Interesting Points

- More than one-third of Newfoundland's rare plants live in the rare limestone barrens habitat (about 0.01% of the province's land area).
- Willows range from small, dwarf species like Barrens Willow to towering trees like Weeping Willow.
- Willow bark contains pain-alleviating salicylic acid, which served as the inspiration for Aspirin.



Some plants are very small



Boat-shaped leaves

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Similar Species

Numerous other dwarf willows occur in Newfoundland, but only a few (*Salix calcicola*, *S. glauca*, *S. reticulata*, *S. uva-ursi*, *S. vestita*, and *S. candida*) can grow in harsh, limestone barren habitat. None of these, however, have small, oval, shiny, shallow-v cross-sectioned, "boat-like" leaves with lighter undersides and veins on both sides, a darker brown (versus orange) stem, female catkins that are less than 2 cm long, hairless and usually dark purple.



Salix reticulata



Salix calcicola



Salix uva-ursi

© JOHN MAUNDER (all three)

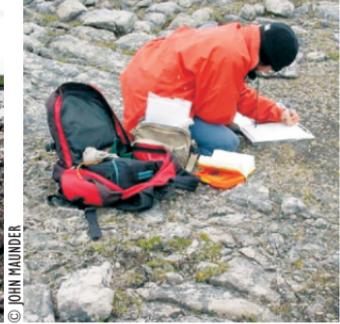
Threats to Survival

- Limestone extraction for gravel for road construction and maintenance can eliminate plants, soil, and even bedrock, essentially destroying suitable habitat.
- Use of off-highway vehicles crushes plants and rutting destroys suitable habitat.
- Climate change may alter Barrens Willow habitat.



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Habitat-destroying gravel extraction



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Researcher in limestone barrens

How You Can Help

Support local stewardship activities and learn to recognize limestone barrens habitat. Encourage others to tread lightly on this sensitive habitat by avoiding the use of off-highway vehicles or trucks and reporting illegal quarrying or dumping to the Newfoundland and Labrador's Wildlife Division.

Contacts, Information, Sighting Reports & Stewardship Opportunities

Contact: NL Wildlife Division (709) 637-2026

Info: www.speciesatrisk.gc.ca, www.env.gov.nl.ca/env/wildlife/endangeredspecies/

Stewardship: www.limestonebarrens.ca