

Goat Willow

Salix caprea

Plants · Deciduous tree · catkins Mar–Apr



Photo by Trougnouf (Benoit Brummer), CC BY 4.0, via Wikimedia Commons

A small, spreading deciduous tree of damp ground, woodland edge and waste places, with broad, oval, softly grey-hairy leaves quite unlike the narrow leaves of most willows. In early spring it carries the familiar silvery buds that open into fat catkins — bright yellow and pollen-laden on male trees, greener on females. It is common throughout the Dumfries area.

BEHAVIOUR

Goat willow flowers before almost anything else, and those catkins are a critical early source of pollen and nectar for queen bumblebees emerging from hibernation and for early hoverflies and moths. The seed is minute and cottony, blowing far and germinating on bare damp ground. Willows support an exceptionally large number of associated insect species.

WHEN TO SEE IT

J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

QUICK FACTS

FAMILY	Willows (Salicaceae)
HEIGHT	Up to 10 m
STATUS	Native; common, and a key early nectar source

Photo by Trougnouf (Benoit Brummer), CC BY 4.0, via Wikimedia Commons

Natureville