



Tried and True Native Plants To Replace Invasive Plants

Best Bets: Plants
for Particular Uses
in the Mid-Atlantic

INVASIVE PLANTS: Non-Native Willows (*Salix alba*, *S. babylonica* & *S. fragilis*)



Brought to the U. S. in the 1700s by European settlers, these natives of Europe, Asia, and northern Africa have since escaped from cultivation and naturalized in minimally managed areas. Chinese weeping willow, *Salix babylonica*, is listed as invasive in Arlington. *S. alba* and its weeping cultivar (*S. fragilis*), which is often used in landscapes, are considered problematic in the City of Alexandria.

Problems	Chinese Weeping Willow & Black Willow
Female catkins contain numerous minute wind-borne seeds	
Seeds germinate immediately on soil contact	
Expands by suckers into groves and re-sprouts vigorously from cut stumps	
Broken twigs take root and colonize new areas when carried downstream, especially after floods	
Large size not appropriate for most residential properties or for street tree	
Frequently injured in ice and wind storms	
Not suited to locations near structures because of constant limb litter	
Shallow roots make gardening underneath tree difficult	
Desired Characteristics	
Moisture-loving tree	
Native Alternatives	
<i>Salix nigra</i> (Black Willow)	
<i>Salix sericea</i> (Silky Willow)	
<p><i>developed by Master Gardeners of Northern Virginia, serving Arlington and Alexandria</i></p>	

Images by Elaine Mills, Massanutten and Meadowlark Botanical Gardens



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