

WILLOW - Crack Willow

Salix fragilis

Crack willow is an invasive species in New Zealand and is listed on the National Pest Plant Accord. The name comes from the twigs which break off very easily with a loud 'crack'. The broken twigs and branches take root easily, enabling the species to multiply in new areas. Where the broken twigs fall into rivers, they can be carried large distances downstream before germinating.

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Growth form

Crack willow is usually found beside rivers and streams. It is a medium to large deciduous tree, which grows quickly to 10–20 m tall. Their leaves are bright green with a finely serrated edge.

Flowers

Flowers are produced in early spring, and pollinated by insects. Willows have flower clusters, with little or no petals.

Control

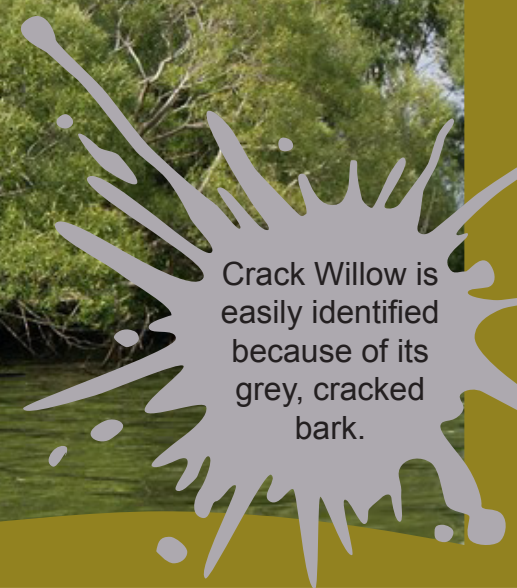
By the mid 1990s Pekapeka had become a willow forest with low levels of native biodiversity. Willow control was considered essential at Pekapeka as until it was removed no significant rehabilitation could proceed.



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Crack Willow is easily identified because of its grey, cracked bark.