Checklist completed for cultivars of Salix L. (willow)

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A comprehensive resource is now available for horticulturalists, plant breeders, and gardeners. The photo of White willow (*Salix alba*) was taken in Minsk, Belarus. Credit: Photo courtesy of Y. Kuzovkina.

Grown around the world, willows are cultivated for their exceptional technical and ornamental characteristics. Willows are commonly used as stock for basket and cricket bat manufacturing, as sources of chemical compounds (such as tannin and salicin), as forage for livestock, as ornamentals, and as amenity plantings. Recently, willow being recognized as an important source for bioenergy production and for various ecosystem services. Willows are members of the genus *Salix* L. (Salicaceae Mirb., willow), a family that comprises about 450 species with numerous subspecies, varieties, forms, natural and artificial hybrids, and cultivars.

Yulia A. Kuzovkina, from the Department of Plant Science and Landscape Architecture at the University of Connecticut, recently completed a compilation of all willow cultivars that have been present in the public domain. The Checklist for Cultivars of *Salix* contains relevant information for each name entry, including the name status, bibliography, distinctive characters, and a description of the standard specimen. A summary of Kuzovkina's research appeared in the November 2015 issue of *HortScience*. "Numerous cultivars have been developed and named over the centuries, but until now, no comprehensive compilation of these records has ever been made," Kuzovkina wrote.

Kuzovkina explained that The International Poplar Commission of the Food and Agriculture Organization was appointed in 2013 as the International Cultivar Registration Authority for willows. "The Checklist for Cultivars of *Salix* was compiled as the first step toward the promotion of a standardized registration process and the establishment of a Cultivar Register for *Salix*," the author said.

Eight hundred and fifty-four cultivar epithets with accompanying information are included in the Checklist. The largest group of cultivars (more than 200) is represented by basket selections, followed by

selections for ornamental plantings and biofuel production. "The Checklist may be the most comprehensive single information resource related to the cultivars of willow," Kuzovkina said. "But it should be regarded as a working reference. It will be updated regularly with additional information and corrections of errors as more records are discovered and created."

Kuzovkina said the Checklist will serve a diverse constituency of users including plant breeders, nursery professionals, horticulturists, plant records specialists, foresters, and gardeners. "The goal is to provide the foundation for stability in the denomination of *Salix* cultivars and to promote the effective utilization of germplasm."

More information: The Checklist can be accessed through the International Poplar Commission's website at www.fao.org/forestry/ipc/69637/en/ .

The complete study and abstract are available on the ASHS *HortScience* electronic journal web site: hortsci.ashspublications.org/c … /50/11/1608.abstract

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