

## Henry's Garnet Virginia Willow

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### *Itea virginica*

- **Recommended Use:** Landscape shrub, pollinator garden, rain gardens and native plantings
- **Exposure:** Full sun to shade
- **Size:** 5 to 6 feet tall; 4 to 5 feet wide
- **Habit:** Upright
- **Bloom Time:** April and May
- **Maintenance Category:** Low
- **Water Use:** Moderate
- **Highlights:** Performs well in wet soil, native plant, large flower clusters, fall color.



Flower racemes are creamy white and begin appearing in mid-to-late spring.

### Summary

The Virginia willow is a deciduous shrub that is native to the woody and swampy floodplains of the Gulf South states. It is a great low-maintenance specimen for low-lying and moist areas but can tolerate dry soil as well. It also tolerates a range of exposure, from full sun to full shade. Soil pH can range from acidic to alkaline.

The Virginia willow has an upright to arching form, with thin stems providing a rather open canopy. Its leaves are 2 to 3 inches long and have slightly toothed margins, creating texture for the landscape. The white-colored flowers, which appear in April and May, are borne on long racemes (spikes) that are wonderfully fragrant and attractive to humans and pollinators alike. The flowers are held above the foliage and can point in many directions, giving the plant a somewhat whimsical look during peak bloom.

This native plant has very few pest or disease problems other than occasional leaf-eating insect damage. Very little pruning is needed and should be performed after blooming is finished. Avoid winter and spring pruning to preserve the following year's flower buds.

The Henry's Garnet variety is noted for its larger (6-inch) flower spikes and its impressive deep purplish-red or garnet foliage in the fall. This plant makes a great addition to pollinator and rain gardens and is an excellent choice for anyone looking to take advantage of the low maintenance and lack of pesticides needed for native plants.

### Requirements

- Plant in sunny or shady locations. Flowers best with at least four hours of full sun.
- Soil can be wet as long as it is not waterlogged or dry.
- Soil pH can range from 5.0 to 7.0.



*Henry's Garnet is a low-growing shrub that performs well in sun or shade.*

- Plant in the fall through early spring for best results.
- Easily propagated by seed, cuttings and dividing suckered plants.

### Growth Habit

- Upright and arching with thin stems.
- Approximately 5 to 6 feet high by 4 to 5 feet wide.
- Long spikes of small white flowers borne above lush green foliage in the spring.
- Easily spreads through suckers.

### Care and Maintenance

- Monitor for summer wilting if planted in a dry location.
- Late winter application of slow-release fertilizer can increase vigor but is not necessary.
- Prune after spring bloom only.
- Remove suckering plants to control size and spread.



*Close-up of white flower spikes on Henry's Garnet Virginia willow.*

For more information on Henry's Garnet Virginia willow and other Louisiana Super Plants, contact your local LSU AgCenter Extension office or visit [LSUAgCenter.com/SuperPlants](http://LSUAgCenter.com/SuperPlants).



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