

Salix production for the floral industry in the USA



Who grow willows

- Plant nurseries (ornamental and erosion control)
- Biomass growers
- Basket makers
- Floral cut-stem production

The USDA Specialty Crop Initiative



- the production of woody ornamental cut stems, representing a specialty niche in cut flower production, has risen in popularity
- dogwood (*Cornus*), *Forsythia*, *Hydrangea*, lilac (*Syringa*), and *Viburnum*
- potential as an off-season production option, or third crop enterprise

Objectives

- to characterize the extent of *Salix* cultivation as a floral crop in the USA by identifying the active willow growers and their profiles, production acreage and gross sales
- to identify if the production practices are well defined and consistent to support crop expansion
- the potential the crop's expansion

Distribution and concentration of *Salix* survey recipients in the United States



52 growers
The Association of
Specialty Cut Flower
Growers (ASCFG)

Grower profile

- Small scale specialty cut flower producers (58.6%)
- Large scale specialty cut flower producers (24.1%)
- 24.1% considered *Salix* as “major crop”
 - Total gross sales for 80.0% was less than \$25,000; 17.0% grossed \$25,000-50,000 and 3% grossed \$50,000-100,000

- good cash return, up to \$1.25 to \$1.75 per stem of common pussy willow
- annual gross financial returns for willow plants, up to \$24.94, is much higher than for many other woody florals



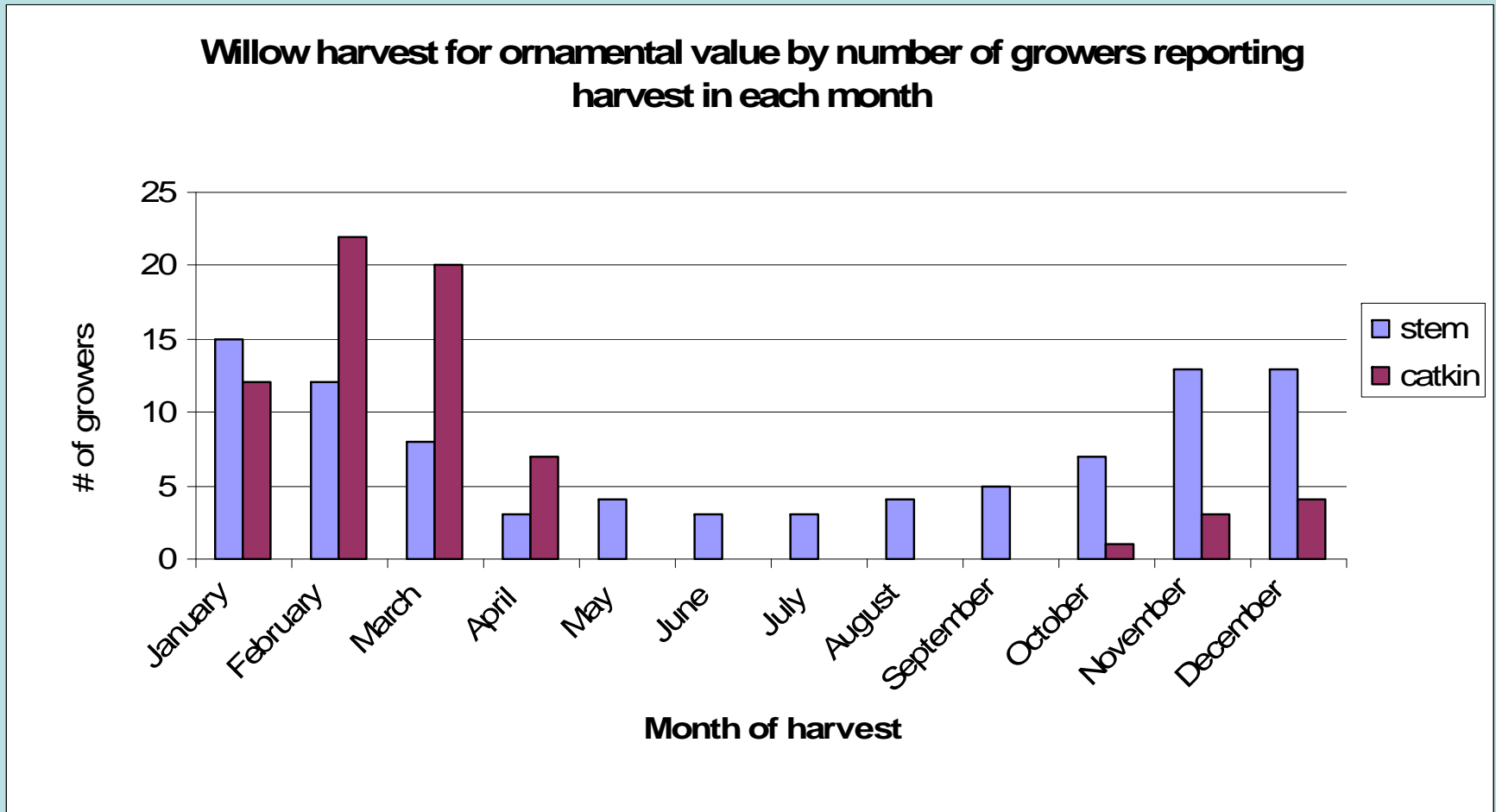
Taxa in cultivation

- For catkins



- For Stems

The seasonality of the crop



Taxa identification

- Five growers used scientific names for a few taxa
- The remaining growers identified their selection by only common names
- Many names were unique to the grower (“gray catkins with black skin”, “champaign”, “old variety”)

positive outlook

Strong support was expressed

- for the importance of willow in their product selection
- for customer satisfaction
- for future intent to increase the production acreage, and even to extent seasonal markets

The crop is complying with the principles of ecological sustainability and social acceptance

- Production was predicated on organic principals, requiring only basic input.
- Harvests were sustainable for many years from initial planting plants
- Plants produced harvestable branches relatively early in the crop life cycle.



The informal nature of the crop

- the identification of growers' own personal experience as a main source of knowledge
- very different, and sometimes ambiguous, cultivation procedures the lack of a standard production technology with wide variations in basic cultural practices including planting, fertilization, and harvest techniques.
- frequent inability to accurately identify their selections

Future research

- a set of research questions to improve the understanding of the fundamentals of willow production and to stimulate further development of this crop
 - Spacing
 - Fertilization, irrigation
 - Harvest techniques



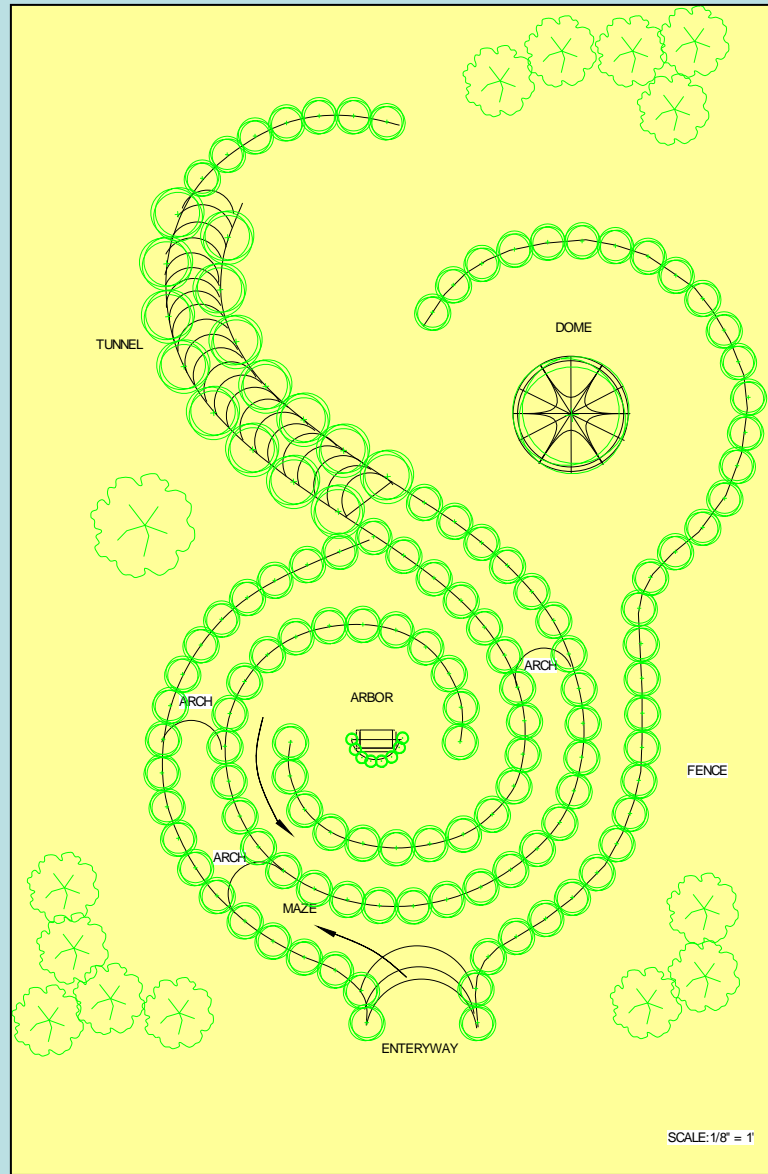
LIVING STRUCTURES







“Children’s Mini-Village”





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