The State University of New York College of Environmental Science and Forestry (SUNY-ESF) presents ‘Owasco’ shrub willow from their willow breeding program. ‘Owasco’ is a high-yielding shrub willow that is disease resistant, produces multiple small stems, and is well suited for biomass plantings, privacy hedges, living snowfences, and ornamental plantings.

Salix viminalis × S. miyabeana ‘Owasco’
Botanical Name: *Salix viminalis × S. miyabeana* ‘Owasco’

Hardiness: U.S.D.A. Zones 4 - 6

Development: ‘Owasco’ was produced through controlled willow breeding in 1999 as part of a research project to produce new willow cultivars that generate high biomass yields on a variety of sites, display resistance to diseases and pests, and possess agronomic traits suitable for mechanical planting, harvesting, and post-harvest processing. ‘Owasco’ was produced by crossing *Salix viminalis* ‘SV7’ with *S. miyabeana* ‘SX64’.

Significance: ‘Owasco’ is a shrub willow cultivar displaying exceptionally rapid growth, producing greater than 75% more woody biomass than production variety ‘SX67’ in a selection trial, with low incidence of rust disease or damage by beetle or sawfly. Woody stems can be harvested every three to four years, and new shoots will re-sprout the following season. Repeated harvesting of shrub willow plantations can be sustained for at least 15 years.

Description:
Height and Width: 15-20 feet tall, 3-5 foot crown spread at 3 years when grown at 2 x 3 foot spacing.
Habit: Fast-growing, upright, deciduous shrub with multiple small-diameter, vertical stems.
Foliage: Green oblong alternate leaves, typically 2.5-3.5 inches long, 0.5-1 inches wide, with foliage April through October in Zone 5.
Bark: Grey-orange when young, turning yellow-green with age; red-orange buds in winter.
Flowers: Female, early spring.
Seeds: Not known to be pollinated under field conditions.

Culture: Adaptable to a wide range of soil and moisture conditions. Prefers maximum sunlight.

Propagation: Roots easily from dormant stem cuttings.

Uses: Excellent for bioenergy plantations, privacy hedges, snowfences, and ornamental plantings.


For information on the SUNY-ESF Willow Biomass Program go to [www.esf.edu/willow](http://www.esf.edu/willow).

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