

Dogwood- *Cornus florida*

Habitat

- Flowering dogwood is a woody, flowering understory tree native to eastern North America, found wild under larger forest trees and at woodland edges
- Perhaps the most beautiful native American flowering tree, favored for its showy white bracts and interesting bark structure
- Zones 5 to 9

Habit and Form

- Deciduous tree, height and width: 15 to 30 feet
- Low-branching, broadly-pyramidal, somewhat flat-topped habit

Summer Foliage

- Oval, opposite, dark green leaves 3-6" long, with veins that bend up toward the tip.
- Leaves have a smooth to wavy margin.

Autumn Foliage

- Leaves turn attractive shades of red in fall that lasts well into fall

Flowers

- Blooms in May
- Showy white bracts emerge before the leaves
- The flower-head is surrounded by four large bracts (not petals), each bract about 1" long and wide, broad, rounded, often with a distinct notch.

Fruit

- Bright red clusters of berries are bitter and inedible (mildly poisonous) to humans) but are loved by birds. Fruits mature in late summer to early fall and may persist until late in the year

Bark

- Dark grey to black bark becomes scaly to finely blocky as tree matures

Culture

- Prefers sunny location and best if there's some afternoon shade in hot summers
- Plant in well-drained soil slightly acidic to neutral pH.
- Mulch 2 to 4" deep to keep roots cool and moist in hot summers

Ecosystem Services

- Attracts birds and butterflies

Landscape Uses

- All season interest, spring beauty, fall color focal point
- Popular as a specimen or small grouping around homes, near patios or in lawns. Also effective in woodland, bird or native plant gardens.

Liabilities

- When stressed, flowering dogwood, is susceptible to a rather large number of disease problems, the most serious being dogwood anthracnose.
- Plants are also susceptible to powdery mildew, leaf spot, canker, root rot and leaf and twig blight.
- Stressed trees become vulnerable to borers. Leaf miner and scale are less serious potential insect pests.