

Dogwoods – MTYEWTK (More than you ever wanted to know.)

The genus *Cornus* (Dogwood) encompasses a wide variety of plants. There are trees, shrubs and even a groundcover. There are many stories about how dogwoods got their name. Our favorite is that the wood which is hard and strong was used to make loom shuttles also known as dags, thus this is the tree from which the “Dagwood” came. Dagwood was corrupted to dogwood over time. Or maybe George Washington tied his dog to one—who knows?

They are one of our favorite trees. Late spring blooms, some followed by strawberry like fruit, great fall color, attractive shape and some with peeling bark as they mature. What’s not to like? The flowers may be pink or white; the leaves green or variegated green and white or variegated green and yellow; and the form may be upright vase shaped, compact dwarf or weeping. Whatever size yard you have, there is a dogwood for you.

Many of the dogwood shrubs have attractive colored bark visible in the wintertime and are wet ground tolerant (something we value more with each flood.). Shrub dogwoods have flat clusters of lacey flowers and most spread at the base and can be used to help stabilize soil. Regular pruning each spring keeps their size manageable and promotes new growth with the brightest color.



Oddly enough, one of the shrubs often mistaken for a dogwood is actually *Viburnum Maresii*, a type of doublefile viburnum (*viburnum plicatum tomentosum*). It blooms in late spring at the same time as the dogwoods and from a distance the layered flowers look very much like a dogwood. This is a great companion plant for the dogwood and Maresii’s fall color complements the dogwood’s fall color.



There is also a ground cover variety of dogwood *Cornus canadensis* or bunchberry. This little spreading woodland plant has tiny white dogwood flowers above a set of four small dogwood leaves in spring and summer. Purplish-red fall color on leaves is highlighted with red berries in the fall. Bunchberry likes shady woodland sites.

With so many choices available. It’s best to visit the nursery and choose your dogwood from the wide selection available. The following are available at the nursery.

Trees

Cornelian Cherry (*cornus mas*) - Bright tufts of yellow flowers in spring, edible tart red fruit in late summer. They come in green leaved and variegated forms. Selected as a great Plant Pick by the Miller botanical gardens. Link for complete description and picture:

<http://www.greatplantpicks.org/display?id=2380&searchterm=all>



Asian Dogwoods (*cornus kousa*) - pink or white flowers, some with variegated leaves and there is a weeping form. Asian dogwoods are considered the most disease resistant of the tree dogwoods.

Varieties we have available: Chinensis, Milky Way, National, Prophet, Heart throb, Rosabella, Satomi Rose (pictured), Samaritan, Summer Fun, Weaver's Weeping and Wolf Eyes.

Milky Way was selected as a great Plant Pick by the Miller botanical gardens. Link for complete description and picture:

<http://www.greatplantpicks.org/display?id=2379&searchterm=all>

Eastern Dogwoods (*cornus florida*) - Cherokee Brave, Cherokee Chief and Cherokee Sunset. Grows to 25' x 22', Reddish-pink flowers with white center, Red fall color.

Rutgers dogwoods (*cornus x rutgersensis*) Hybrid crosses of *cornus kousa* and *cornus florida* or *cornus nuttallii*. Combines disease resistance of Asian dogwood with the larger flowers of Eastern and Western dogwoods. Usually no fruit. They have 'star' names. Varieties available- Aurora, Celestial, Stellar Pink, Starlight and Venus.



Venus (pictured) (*cornus kousa* x *nuttallii*) has very large showy white flowers, little fruit and red-purple fall color. It grows to 25' tall x 20'.

Cornus alternifolia 'Argentea' has a distinctive branching pattern, white flowers in late spring, and bluish-black berries. The superlative white-edged,

green leaves make this tree a stunning addition to the garden. Selected as a great Plant Pick by the Miller botanical gardens. Link for complete description and picture:

<http://www.greatplantpicks.org/display?id=2952&searchterm=all>

Pagoda Dogwood (*Cornus alternifolia*) - Unusual, lacy white flowers, reminiscent of the blooms of Queen Anne's lace. In late summer, bluish-black berries decorate the tree until the birds find them! Selected as a great Plant Pick by the Miller botanical gardens. Link for complete description and picture:

<http://www.greatplantpicks.org/display?id=2375&searchterm=all>

June Snow (*Cornus controversa*) - layered branches are covered with clusters of frothy, 6-inch clusters of white flowers in June and blue-black fruit clusters in autumn. Fall foliage color ranges from orange to red and plum reds. Selected as a great Plant Pick by the Miller botanical gardens. Link for complete description and picture:

<http://www.greatplantpicks.org/display?id=2377&searchterm=all>

Shrub Dogwoods

Ivory Halo (*Cornus alba*) Variegated Red Twig dogwood - compact selection of variegated dogwood has beautiful variegated foliage in summer and attractive burgundy twigs in winter. To 5-6' tall and wide.

Red Gnome (*Cornus alba*) dark green foliage turns an outstanding mottled burgundy in the fall. Clusters of creamy white flowers at the ends of the branches in late spring and white berries in mid summer. The tomato-orange branches are showy in winter. Grows 3-4' x 3-4'.



Midwinter Fire (*Cornus sanguinea*) A large multi-stemmed deciduous shrub with brilliant orange-red stem color. It's even more striking in winter when its brightly colored stems flicker shades of red, orange, and yellow. To 8-10' x 8-10'. Cut back regularly in spring for best color and to manage size.

And yes we also stock *Viburnum Maresii*. (pictured right) Click link below for more information about *Maresii*.

<http://www.greatplantpicks.org/display?id=2915&searchterm=all>

