

## Flowering Dogwood (*Cornus florida*)

The state tree of Virginia, Flowering Dogwood grows 20 to 35 feet tall and spreads 25 to 30 feet. It can be trained with one central trunk or as a picturesque multi-trunked tree.

The flowers consist of four bracts which subtend the small head of yellow flowers. The bracts may be pink or red depending on cultivar but the species color is white. Pink-flowering cultivars grow poorly in USDA hardiness zones 8 and 9. The bright red fruits are often eaten by birds.

The fall color depends on site and seed source but on most sun grown plants will be red to maroon. Fall color is more vivid in USDA hardiness zones 5 to 8a.



Dogwoods can be grown in sun or shade but shaded trees will be less dense, grow more quickly and taller, have poor fall color, and less flowers. Trees prefer part shade (preferably in the afternoon) in the southern end of its range. Many nurseries grow the trees in full sun, but they are irrigated regularly. Flowering Dogwood prefers a deep, rich, well-drained, sandy or clay soil and has a moderately long life. It is not recommended for heavy, wet soils unless it is grown on a raised bed to keep roots on the dry side. The roots will rot in soils without adequate drainage.

Information Source:

Gilman, E. F. and Watson, D.G. (1993). *Cornus florida: Flowering Dogwood*. University of Florida. <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/st185>.

Photos by: Alicia Lamborn