



## Plants for Birds:

### Red Osier Dogwood (Red-twig Dogwood, Red Willow)

- **Scientific Name:** *Cornus sericea*
- **Height:** 6–10 feet
- **Hardiness:** Zone 2
- **Wildlife Value:** Highly desirable berries, cover, nesting sites, and browse



**R**ed osier dogwood is a colorful, native shrub that brings zest to a garden as well as providing food, shelter and nesting places for birds. It has clusters of white blossoms in the spring, attractive white berries in fall/winter and delightful brilliant red stems in the winter. A wide variety of birds love the berries including catbirds,

woodpeckers, finches, thrushes, waxwings, tanagers, grosbeaks, grouse and pheasants, just to name a few. Dogwood thickets also provide great cover and excellent nesting sites to rear young.

They are particularly good habitat for little birds such as flycatchers, sparrows and warblers.

Red osier dogwood is common throughout Canada and Northern US. It is found in rich moist riparian areas, forest openings and often occurs with alder, willow, cottonwood, aspen, currants and horsetails. It is used in inventory and monitoring systems as an indicator species of wetland sites. It is adaptable to a wide range of soil conditions but grows best in moist, well drained soils and in full sun to partial shade. It can tolerate occasional drought but should receive some supplemental water in a home garden.

Red osier dogwood is a spreading multi-stemmed shrub that grows 6-10 feet high and can sucker up to 10 feet wide. For smaller areas use the 'Isanti' cultivar that stays 5 feet tall and 5 feet wide. Dogwoods bloom creamy white blossoms May to June and produce pea-sized white berries in the fall. Its autumn foliage is very colorful as the leaves turn bright red. Its winter red stems against white snow are stunning and add a major winter interest to the garden. Red osier dogwood is very cold hardy. It's easy to propagate from seed and cuttings and is a fast grower. In the landscape it's often used for mass plantings, hedges and screening, general garden use, naturalizing and in woodland gardens.

Plant this all-star native shrub in your backyard and you will be enticing pollinators to your garden and supplying food and habitat for many species of birds. Keep in mind that it may need to be fenced when young to protect it from deer browsing.

