Dogwoods

Genus Characteristics

Leaves: Leaves are simple with an entire margin. Most dogwoods are oppositely arranged with few exceptions (*Cornus controversa*). When leaves are split gently, white fibrous hairs are present. Veins curve to run parallel to midrib. Leaves may be changing color or curling in late summer due to drought stress.

Cornus florida

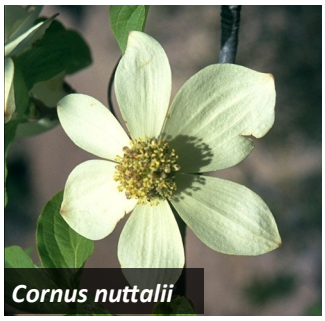
Cornus florida

Fruit: Dogwood fruit varies by species but is usually a red-purple drupe maturing through summer. Appearance, color, and number of fruits in cluster are all clues to species identification.

Cornus kousa

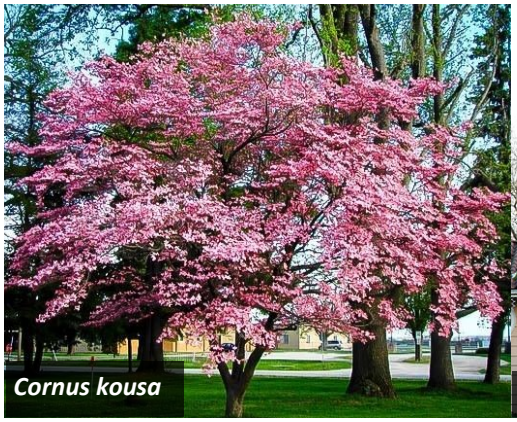
Cornus controversa

Flowers: Dogwoods bloom in early spring and summer. Most blooms are showy and colorful. Some species have large bracts surrounding smaller true flower clusters in the center.


Cornus nuttalii

Cornus kousa

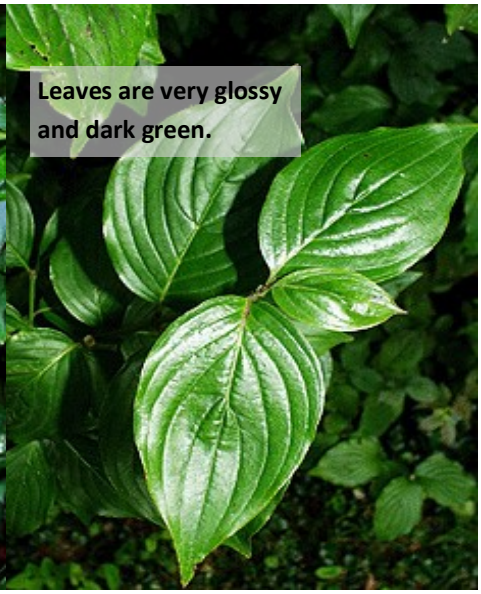
Form: Dogwoods tend to be small trees, with a round form and layered branching. Most mature to a maximum of 25 feet.


Cornus kousa

Cornus nuttalii

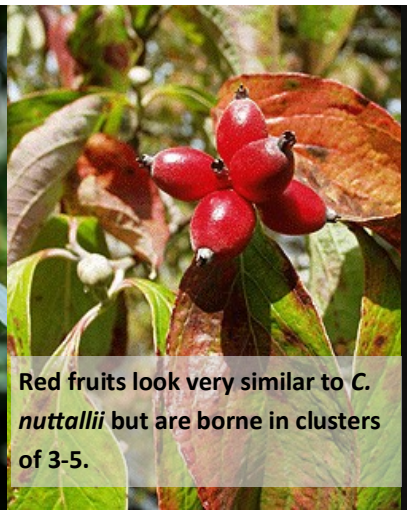
Dogwoods

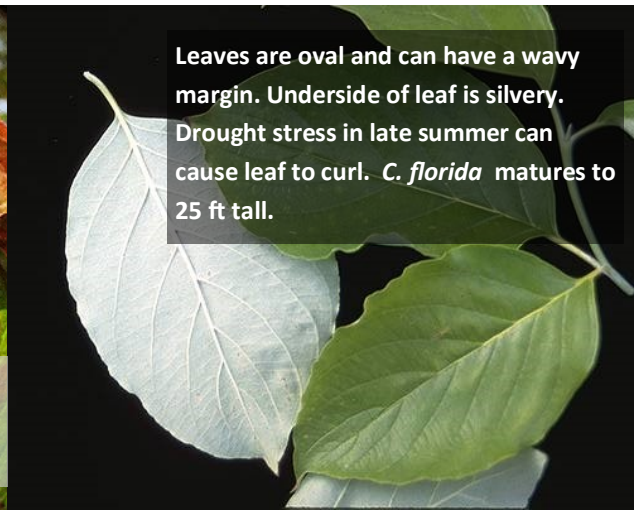
Cornus mas—Cornelian Cherry Dogwood



Cornus kousa—Kousa dogwood

Cornus florida—Flowering dogwood

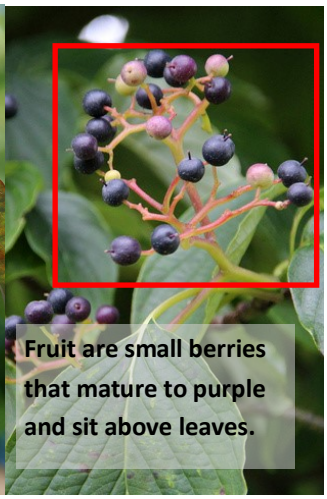




Cornus controversa—Giant dogwood

Flowers are clusters of tiny white blooms that sit above branches.

Leaves are alternately arranged, unlike most dogwoods.



Fruit are small berries that mature to purple and sit above leaves.

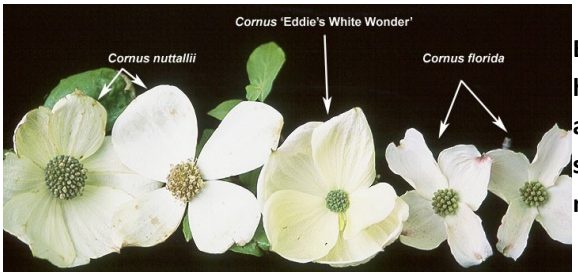
Cornus nuttallii—Pacific dogwood

Flowers can be surrounded by 4-8 bracts. *C. florida* has only 4.

Fruits are dark red and clustered tightly at the end of a stem.

Form is round. *C. nuttallii* matures to be a larger tree than most other dogwoods.

Common *Cornus* Hybrids



Eddie's White Wonder is a hybrid between *C. nuttallii* and *C. florida*. It has 4-6 bracts surrounding the flowers and matures to 25 ft tall.

'Stellar Pink' is a hybrid cross between *C. kousa* and *C. florida.* Blooms are pale pink and bloom in mid-May.

Without blooms and fruits, dogwoods can be very difficult to identify to species. Dogwoods often look very stressed in late summer, which adds to the difficulty. If you aren't sure, take a sample! If Urban Forestry staff is stumped, we'll send it to the experts at Hoyt Arboretum.