

# Red Osier Dogwood

**Description:** This beautiful native woody shrub provides color throughout the winter months with its bright red branches. It is easy to grow and adapts to many different growing environments. The red osier fruit is a favorite food for many birds and the branches make excellent basket weaving material. This shrub would go well in a hedgerow, windbreak or as an accent plant in your garden.

## Primary Uses:

Excellent basket weaving material.

Over 98 species of birds eat the berries and use the branches for shelter.

This native makes a beautiful ornamental landscape plant.

Used as a component of a windbreak or hedgerow.

## Secondary Uses:

General insect plant.

The berries are edible but are very tart and bitter.

Food source for large and small mammals.

The bark is used as a natural dye.

Can be coppiced once every 3 years.

The leaves and inner bark is used in ceremonial smoking mixtures.

Branches are excellent material for making arrows, stakes, firewood, fences, tools, charcoal, etc.

Medicinally used to treat headaches, skin eruptions, diarrhea, and sore throats among other ailments.

## Yield:

**Harvesting:** If using the branches for basket weaving then it is best to harvest in early spring so the bright red bark color is retained when dried. The berries are best harvested from August to October.

**Storage:** Berries- can be eaten fresh or dried. The berries can be mashed with other fruits and dried in cakes. Branches- dry the branches and store out of sunlight. Briefly soak the branches just long enough so they are pliable when you are ready to use.

**Plant Type:** A medium to large woody shrub reaching 7-10' tall and wide

**Leaf Type:** Deciduous

**Forest Garden Use:** Sub-Canopy (Understory) Layer, Shrub Layer

**Cultivars/Varieties:** Cultivars are available that are more compact, disease resistant or have brighter/different color stems during the winter months.

**Pollination:** This plant is self fertile and attractive to pollinators.

**Flowering:** Yellowish white flowers most abundant in late May through mid-June; potentially lasting through August.

## Life Span:

Years to Begin Bearing: Fruit in 2 – 3 years

Years of Useful Life: Nearly unlimited when the plant is coppiced in late fall after the leaves turn brown and fall off the stem. Cut all stems to 2-3" from the base before spring growth. This plant spreads by underground stolons to form dens thickets.

## GROWING CONDITIONS FOR THIS PLANT

**Light:** Full sun to part shade

**Shade:** Needs at least 4-6 hours of sun daily

**Moisture:** prefers nitrogen-rich soils that are consistently moist throughout the year. This plant will tolerate dry periods in late summer and saturated conditions. Does well in clayey soils.

**pH:** very adaptable and will tolerate a wide range of pH (5.0 to 8.0)

