

eased, dying and decayed wood and any wood that may be insect damaged. Make pruning cuts back to a crotch. Use "thinning out" cuts on dogwoods to open up the interior of the tree. Don't use pruning paints or wound dressing on cuts. These inhibit growth of beneficial fungi and also prevent the tree from "walling off" the cut area.

Diseases

Poor appearance of dogwood trees often is caused by many factors other than disease. These include a poor planting site, low fertility and heat or drought stress. A few diseases cause problems. These include stem or trunk canker, leaf and petal spots, twig dieback and powdery mildew. After you positively identify the problem, treat with a recommended fungicide and use proper cultural practices



to manage the disease.

Insects

It is important to protect dogwoods from insect attack. Sometimes insects will be a secondary cause of damage to a tree. Insects "move in" in response to environmental stresses or mechanical damage. Some insects common on dogwoods include dogwood borer, twig borer, club-gall midge and scales. Occasionally, other insects can present problems. Your county agent can help you identify insects; use the recommended insecticides for control.

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Dogwoods



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Dogwoods

The flowering dogwood (*Cornus florida*) is native to much of the eastern United States. Dogwood is a very versatile ornamental tree. As a landscape plant, it is well suited to small areas and will reach an average mature height of 15 to 20 feet with a spread (width) of 10 feet.

Factors to consider in planting dogwoods include:

- a well-drained planting site
- shade to partial shade location
- proper planting time
- proper planting hole preparation
- maintenance of mulch
- proper irrigation
- protection from mechanical damage
- protection from disease and insect pressure

Cultivars

Most of the flowering dogwoods are sold as either the white-flowered (bract) form or the pink-flowered (bract) form. Typically, pink dogwoods are slightly less vigorous and require more attention. Special forms of dogwoods are propagated by grafting or budding them to the native species. These named cultivars have foliage, flower or growth habits that are superior to native selections.



Plant Selection

It is critical to select a dogwood tree that is high quality. It's difficult to transplant dogwood trees from the wild, so choose a healthy tree at your local retail garden center. Be sure to examine the tree before purchase.

Look for these characteristics: a healthy root system, a tree proportionally sized between the root and shoot system, no insect or disease problems, good growth habit (branching, stem caliper).

Landscape Planting and Establishment

The time to plant dogwoods in Louisiana is late fall/early winter. It is recommended to plant trees when dormant. Dig a planting hole that is twice the diameter of the root ball and the same depth of the root ball that will be planted. If the area is poorly drained, amend the native soil with sand and organic matter, and plant the dogwood on a "pitcher's mound."

It is also recommended to mulch the newly planted

tree with pine straw or a similar material. Mulch to a depth of 4 inches. Make sure, before placing the mulch, that the dogwood is planted no deeper than what it was previously growing. Avoid any settling or planting the tree too deeply. Dogwoods cannot tolerate these growing conditions.

Watering

Normal rainfall ordinarily provides enough moisture for mulched dogwoods. During droughty periods, however, water the trees weekly. Soak the root area thoroughly. Be careful not to overwater. This results in the same situation as planting the tree in a poorly drained soil.

Fertilization

Dogwoods do not require frequent or high levels of fertilization. A slow to moderate growth rate on dogwoods is more desirable than a fast growth rate. Limit nitrogen fertilization. If fertilization is required, apply in late winter/early spring. Signs that may indicate a need for fertilizer are small, sparse, pale leaves and no twig elongation. Use a slow release granular fertilizer, 8-8-8, 13-13-13 or a similar material. Do not use a high nitrogen fertilizer, such as ammonium nitrate.

Pruning

Dogwoods seldom need pruning. When pruning, remove dead, dis-