

WACD PLANT MATERIALS CENTER

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Red Osier Dogwood (*Cornus stolonifera*)

Distribution

Red Osier Dogwood also known as Red Twig Dogwood is found throughout Washington and the Western U.S. It grows from low valley-bottoms up to the timberline.

Growth Habit

Red Osier Dogwood is a deciduous shrub that can grow to 20 feet tall, and spread to 20 feet wide. Its lower branches that grow along the ground can root into the ground, often resulting in large thickets. Small white flowers make up a large terminal cluster, which yield to a group of greenish-white bitter berries.

Adaptability

Red Osier is usually found growing in moist soils, often along streams, lakes and swamps. It is occasionally found growing on open, upland forested sites. It tolerates shade, but prefers sun.

Comments

- Red Osier Dogwood has long been used as a restoration species, as well as a popular ornamental.
- Its dense, matting root system makes it useful in stream-side stabilization.
- It is also an important species for providing forage for deer, elk and moose in the winter. Certain species of birds use its berries as food, while others use the plant for nesting.
- The red stems provide striking winter interest, and its clusters of small white flowers are showy in spring.
- The clusters of white berries provide color in late summer, and the leaves turn reddish in the fall.

