

gray dogwood *Cornus racemose*

Kingdom: Plantae

Division/Phylum: Magnoliophyta

Class: Magnoliopsida

Order: Cornales

Family: Cornaceae

ILLINOIS STATUS common, native

FEATURES

Gray dogwood is also known as gray-stemmed dogwood or paniced dogwood. This shrub may attain a height of 10 feet. Its opposite, gray-green leaves are simple and entire. Its bark is smooth and light gray. The slender, gray twigs have dark pith. Small, white flowers develop in clusters. The white berries (drupes) produced, each about one-fourth inch in diameter, have red stems.

BEHAVIORS

Gray dogwood may be found statewide in Illinois. It grows in moist woods, upland woods, dry to wet prairies and along roadsides. Flowers are produced from May through July. Gray dogwood plants grow in clusters that give the appearance of a mound. Several species of songbirds take advantage of the closely-spaced twigs and camouflage of the leaves to build their nest in gray dogwood thickets. The leaves, buds, twigs and fruit of this plant are used as food by some wildlife species. Seeds are dispersed in the waste material of birds and mammals that eat the fruit. Leaves turn red or purple in the fall of the year.

HABITATS

Aquatic Habitats

bottomland forests; wet prairies and fens

Woodland Habitats

bottomland forests; coniferous forests; southern Illinois lowlands; upland deciduous forests

Prairie and Edge Habitats

black soil prairie

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