

red-osier dogwood *Cornus sericea*

Kingdom: Plantae

Phylum: Magnoliophyta

Class: Magnoliopsida

Order: Cornales

Family: Cornaceae

ILLINOIS STATUS common, native

FEATURES

Red-osier dogwood is a shrub that can attain a height of three to nine feet. It has multiple stems, and the bark is smooth, shiny and red. Leaves are opposite and lance-shaped to oval. A leaf may reach four inches in length and three inches wide. The leaf margin is smooth. Flat clusters of small, white flowers are produced. The fruit is a one-seeded, white berry.

BEHAVIORS

Red-osier dogwood grows in marshes, calcareous fens and along shorelines. It may be found statewide, but it is much more common in the northern one-half of the state than anywhere else in Illinois and prefers sandy soil. Flowers are produced from May through September. Its red twigs can add color to a garden in winter. The flowers provide nectar and pollen for pollinators. The fruits are eaten by a variety of wildlife species, especially birds, and the stems and leaves can provide food for wildlife species, too.

HABITATS

Aquatic Habitats

marshes; wet prairies and fens

Woodland Habitats

none

Prairie and Edge Habitats

none

© Illinois Department of Natural Resources. 2020. Biodiversity of Illinois.