

Cornus canadensis (Creeping) - Care Guide

Cornus Canadensis - Growing Guide

Creeping dogwood

This is the only member of the dogwoods that is not a shrub or a tree. It is in fact a very attractive creeping rhizomatous (but deciduous) perennial which grows to only around 6in in height and is a vigorous, spreading groundcover plant with 'Cornus bract' white flowers.

C. canadensis is a useful and attractive groundcover plant in a shrub border or even on the edge of a herbaceous one. It has whorls of oval or obovate leaves from the centres of which, in late spring or early summer, emerge green flowers in cymes. These are surrounded or backed by white bracts (sometimes with a pink flush) which are usually in four segments but sometimes six. Even when pot grown in the nursery these plants will then go on to produce fleshy bright red fruits.

Once it gets going Cornus canadensis can spread far and wide in sunny situations or more shady ones. Our view is that the flowers and bracts are in greatest profusion in dappled shade where the ground conditions remain moist.

Do not bother trying to grow the fruits as, in a border context, they will probably do this for you. If you need to give plants away to gardening friends or assist the plant to spread more quickly simply chop up a clump with a spade when dormant in late autumn or early spring and prise the rhizomes apart.

As its name implies this plant is native to north Asia, the USA and Greenland so nothing (short of an inadvertent dose of weed killer) a cold winter can throw at it will have the slightest effect.

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