

Cornaceae

dogwood family

North-temperate shrubs or trees, the dogwoods have few herbaceous perennials amongst them. Inflorescence is a cyme, often subtended by showy bracts. Four or five-merous, stamens oppose the petals, and are of equal number, or totalling 15 arranged in whorls. Calyx may be present or absent, and may be reduced to a rim around the inferior ovary. Fruit is a drupe, the stone grooved longitudinally. Leaves are typically opposite and seldom alternate.

Cornus dogwoods

About 50 species are included here; three shrubs and two herbs reach Nova Scotia. Flowers are four-merous, their sepals minutes and petals small. Leaves have distinctive venation.

Key to species

- A. Inflorescence an open cyme, bracts minute or absent; fruit maturing blue to white; shrubs. B
 - B. Leaves alternate, clustered distally. *Cornus alternifolia*
 - bb. Leaves opposite. C
 - C. Twigs red; fruit white, stone dark brown with yellow stripes. *C. sericea*
 - cc. Twigs not red; fruit blue to white, stone pale. *C. rugosa*
- aa. Inflorescence a dense head, subtended by 4 showy bracts; fruit maturing bright red; herbaceous. D
 - D. Lateral veins arising from the midrib along the leaf. *C. canadensis*
 - dd. Lateral veins arising only from the base of the leaf. *C. suecica*

Cornus alternifolia L.f.

Alternate-leaved Dogwood; cornouiller à feuilles alternes



Photo by Sean Blaney

A shrub with alternate leaves, their margins are smooth. Leaves are clustered at the apices of the branches. Veins strongly mark the leaves, curving to the acute apices. Stems are yellow. Inflorescence is a round cyme of many creamy flowers, producing blue drupes.

Flowers mid-June to mid-July.

Ravines and slopes, deciduous forests and intervalles, on



Photo by Sean Blaney

***Cornus canadensis* L.**

Bunchberry; Pigeonberry; Dwarf Cornel; quatre-temps



Photo by Martin Thomas

A small colonial sub-shrub it is often seen in masses. Leaves, usually six, are borne in whorls at the summit. Veins arise from the midrib and nearly parallel. Sometimes a small pair of leaves is carried below the whorls. All are sessile. Inflorescence is terminal, of crowded tiny greenish flowers, subtended by an involucre of four showy white bracts. Fruits are clustered together, bright-red in colour.

Flowers in June.

Usually growing in the acidic soil of barrens, conifer thickets and mature bogs. Often a pioneer species after disturbance.

Common throughout.

Ranges across the north and south to VA and OR, NM; eastern Asia.



Photo by Sean Blaney

***Cornus rugosa* Lam.**

Round-leaved Dogwood; cornouillier rugueux



Photo by David Mazerolle

Broadly ovate or lanceolate leaves mark this species. Opposite, they are usually coarsely pubescent. Flowers are borne in a loosely arranged globose cyme. Twigs are pale but streaked purple or brown. Fruits range from blue to white.

Flowers appear early in July.

Limited to neutral or alkaline soils, in rocky open forest, talus, ravines.

Common on Cape Blomidon. Scattered elsewhere to northern Cape Breton. Absent in the southwest and along the Atlantic coast.

Ranges from NS to MB, south to VA and IA.



Photo by Martin Thomas

***Cornus sericea* L.**

Red Osier Dogwood; cornouiller stolonifère



Photo by David Mazerolle

Opposite lanceolate leaves are borne on short petioles. Leaves are puberulent. White flowers are clustered in crowded cymes; their peduncles are lightly pubescent. Young twigs and stems are bright red in early spring — a conspicuous feature.



Photo by Martin Thomas

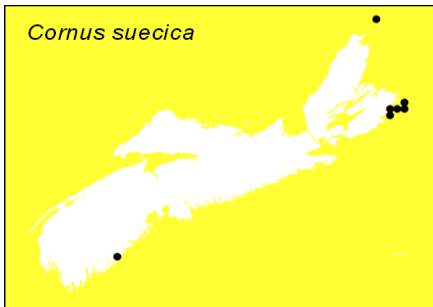
Flowers in June.

A shrub of edges, intervals, fields, highways, especially in alkaline or neutral soils.

Lunenburg and Annapolis counties to Cape Breton, but absent in the more acidic soils as along the Atlantic.

Ranges across the north and south to CA, NM and VA.

***Cornus suecica* L.**
cornouiller de Suède



It is herbaceous like Bunchberry, but it bears opposite leaves for much of the stem's height. Veins arise from the leaf bases. Flowers are terminal, purple and subtended by a white involucre of four bracts. Fruits are red.

Flowers appear in late June.

Sphagnous peats in barrens and on headlands along the coast.

Saint Paul Island and Scatarie Island in Cape Breton; Canso, Guysborough Co., and Port Mouton, Queens Co.

Elsewhere, northern and disjunct; Greenland and NF, south around the Gulf of St. Lawrence in NS and NB; NT, AK and BC; Eurasia.