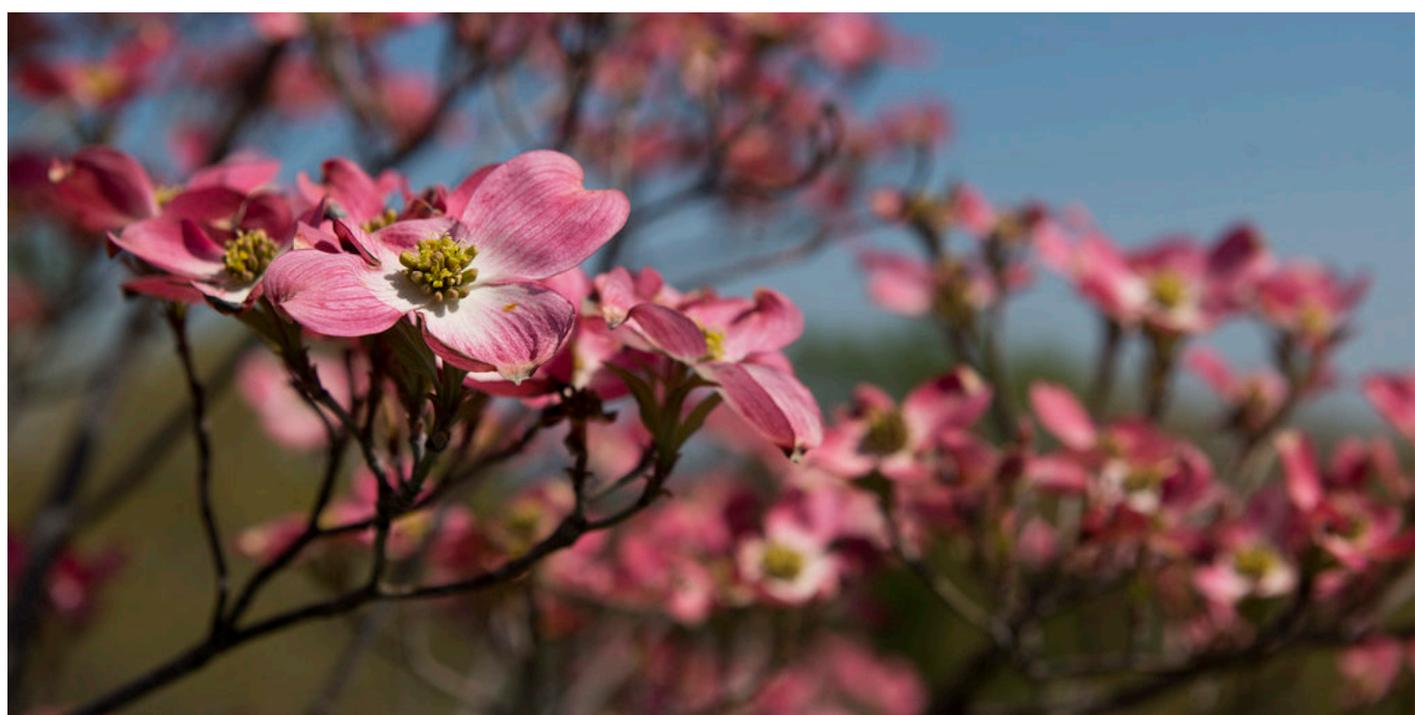


# GARDENING

## THE DICKSON WAY



### Dogwood Trees

*Joann Hayes Anderson*

**The Dogwood tree** is considered by many to be the most beautiful of our native, flowering, small trees. For many years, I especially looked forward to visiting this area in the springtime to see the dogwood trees blooming at the woods edge along the highways.

*Cornus florida* delivers just about everything one wants to see in a small tree for the landscape. Beautiful spring flowers followed by bright red berries that have the capability of hanging on to be eaten by hungry birds in fall and winter, lots of foliage that turns purplish-red in fall, textured, scale-like bark, and a nice silhouette are characteristic of a mature dogwood tree.

Our gardening club visited Don Shadow at his nursery in Franklin County a few years ago. As he guided us through the enormous variety of plants, continuously giving information - too much for anyone to retain it all - he talked about his dogwood cultivars. Information in the following paragraph was taken from my notes during this visit. Don co-authored a book on Dogwoods, and is well respected as an expert nurseryman and lecturer.

Dogwoods can be sensitive to fluctuations in soil temperature, so it's best not to plant too close to pavement. They are best planted in filtered shade, but a sunny spot will be okay if the soil has lots of organic matter and is well-drained. A dogwood tree needs plenty of water for the first few years, and even at maturity, during droughts, must be well-watered to stay healthy. They have shallow root systems, so don't let them dry out. Planting in dense shade will likely prevent flowering. Too much shade and wet leaves can promote diseases, (leaf spot, powdery mildew, and fungus). It's best not to have taller trees continuously dripping water onto dogwoods. Prune in winter while trees are dormant.

Species (our wild dogwoods) seedlings that pop up in our flower beds and around trees are worth saving, in my opinion. They can be transplanted in late fall or early spring. However, the named cultivars on the market will bloom better. Also, they have been bred to be, and will be, more resistant to diseases. The seedlings from cultivars can't be relied on to be the same as the parent. I used to transplant seedlings from my 'Cherokee Chief', which had deep rose-red flowers. Some of the seedlings had flowers that were white, but most were muddy colored. Do not plant dogwoods too deep. Planting what we call "high" will give them an advantage.

Some of Don's favorites that have white flowers are 'Cloud Nine' (most cold-hardy, blooms at early age), 'Appalachian Spring', and 'Barton'. He also likes 'Cherokee Brave' which has red flowers with white centers, and it resists mildew. The contrast can be interesting if both white and pink/red trees are blooming.

There are several cultivars with 'Cherokee' as the first name - Chief, Brave, Princess, Daybreak all seem to be popular. 'Cherokee Sunset' has variegated yellow-green foliage with dark-pink to red flowers. Yes, I know they are bracts, but they look like flowers to me.



### HAPPY GARDENING

Gardening Partners is a non-profit founded in 2003 to serve Dickson County with gardening education and advice.

Readers may submit gardening questions by email: [gfdc471@gmail.com](mailto:gfdc471@gmail.com) on the website: [www.gardening.partners](http://www.gardening.partners) or by mail: PO Box 471 Dickson TN 37056