

Grey dogwood (*Cornus racemosa*)

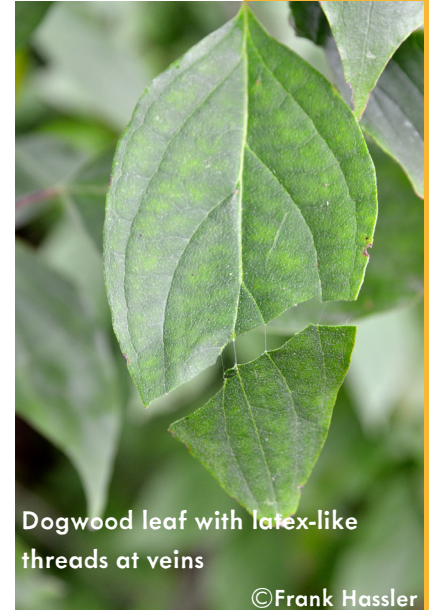
DESCRIPTION:

Grey dogwood is one of Wisconsin's native shrubs that can become overly aggressive in some habitats. This species will grow on variety of different soil types and tolerates full sun to partial shade, but can produce massive clones in mesic prairie settings within a few years if left unchecked. Also found abundantly along untended hedgerows, abandoned fields, old fencelines and open woodlands. Dogwood shrubs are excellent sources of cover and food for songbirds. Deer and other wildlife also access the berries, leaves and twigs for food. It can also be a good screening shrub in a landscaping setting. Due to the wildlife value, this shrub is best suited along edges of larger prairie tracts with an intact management regime that can accommodate and isolate the colony spread.

-2
Persistent
Weed

IDENTIFICATION:

Gray dogwood grows up to 5 feet tall but can reach closer to 8 feet in full sun, open conditions. Leaves are ovate to lanceolate, gray-green with lateral veins and oppositely arranged on slender branches. The shrub blooms from May to June with displays of domed, white flower clusters that give way to white fruits on showy, red stalks. Shrubs tend to have more upright, erect structure unless growing in dense colonies, where they revert to more of a broad, domed shape.



CONTROL METHODS:

Organic: Repeated mowing, multiple times per growing season as the plants resprout can weaken the colony significantly, but will not kill it outright. A regular prescribed fire regime can help control small colonies, but they will readily resprout from the roots. If practical, annual burns until dogwoods die back would be more effective.

Chemical: Glyphosate (Round-Up®, etc.) can be applied as a foliar spray in August, however this will leave dead-standing stems. Cutting and removing the brush is often desirable. After cutting each stem as close to the ground as is practical, treat the stump with concentrated herbicide. We recommend a 20-40% solution of glyphosate in water during the summer and fall. In winter or early-spring a 12.5% solution of triclopyr (Garlon® 4, etc.) may be more effective, but has a higher potential to kill neighboring plants. It is best to apply the herbicide to the cut stumps immediately so as not to lose track of them.

You can also use triclopyr for basal bark treatment. Use a hand-sprayer, or sponge, paint brush or paint roller to applying herbicide completely around the stem in a strip 8-12" tall. For stems less than 1/2" in diameter applying the herbicide to just one side of the stem should be sufficient.



NATIVE ALTERNATIVES:

More conservative native dogwood shrub choices include Pagoda dogwood (*Cornus alternifolia*) and silky dogwood (*C. amomum*), which can handle some sun. We also recommend nannyberry viburnum (*Viburnum lentago*) black chokeberry (*Aronia melanocarpa*), common ninebark (*Physocarpus opulifolius*), and wild plum (*Prunus americana*), all of which are sun-tolerant and great choices to support bird and wildlife habitat.

