Community Greenways Collaborative

THE NEW YORK PHENOLOGY PROJECT

USA npn National Phenology Network

Common name: **Flowering Dogwood** Genus Species: ***Cornus florida***

Photo credit: Denise Ellsworth, OSU, Bugwood.org

Description: Flowering dogwood is a deciduous multi-trunked shrub to small tree growing 10 to 55 feet tall. The true flowers are clustered in the center of four large, white or pinkish bracts that look like petals. The small yellow flowers are inconspicuous, and have both male and female parts.

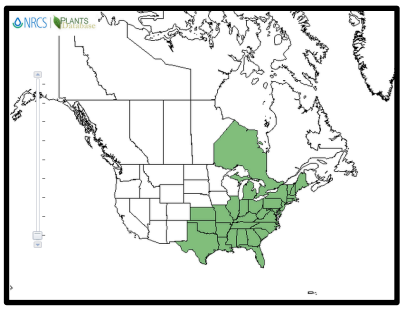
Habitats: Flowering dogwood is often found in moderately moist deciduous woods, in ravines, along streams on flood plains, on lower to middle slopes, and bluffs.

Phenology highlight: The beautiful white flower-like bracts open while the small true flowers in the center are still closed buds.

Species facts

- The four large white bracts attract insect pollinators such as beetles, bees, butterflies, and flies to the tiny yellow flowers. Bracts are modified leaves, not flowers.
- Seeds are eaten by chipmunks, mice, black bear, beaver, deer, skunk, and many bird species.
- Flowering dogwood bark was used by Native Americans to reduce fever and to relieve headaches and backaches. An infusion of the flowers was used to reduce colic pains.
- The wood is hard, strong, and shock resistant and has been used to manufacture handles, pulleys, golf club heads, and roller skate wheels.

Photo credit: David M. Stone
thingsbiological.wordpress.com



Why observe this species? Flowering dogwoods are part of the Cloned Plants Project even though they are not cloned because their response to climate is generally uniform and is similar to cloned dogwoods. For more information, see the Cloned Plants Project on the Nature's Notebook site.

Tips for observing this species: White bracts are not petals and will open while the real flower buds remain closed at the center, so check carefully. If drought seems to be the cause of leaf color or fall for a plant, please make a comment about it for that observation.

Map credit: USDA, NRCS. 2014. The PLANTS Database http://plants.usda.gov, 22 August 2014). National Plant Data Team, Greensboro, NC 27401-4901 USA

For more information about phenology and the New York Phenology Project (NYPP), please visit the NYPP website (www.nyphenologyproject.org) and the USA-NPN website (www.usanpn.org).

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Flowering Dogwood (*Cornus florida*)

***Note**: leaf, flower, and fruit phenophases are nested so you may need to record more than one phenophase for each; for example, if you record **Y** for "open flowers" you should also record **Y** for "flowers or flower buds."*

Breaking leaf buds
One or more breaking leaf buds are visible. A leaf bud is "breaking" once a green leaf tip is visible at the end of the bud, but before the first leaf has unfolded to expose the leaf stalk (petiole).

Leaves One or more live unfolded leaves are visible. An "unfolded" leaf has emerged entirely from the breaking bud so that the leaf stalk (petiole) is visible at its point of attachment to the stem. Do not include dried or dead leaves.

Increasing leaf size
A majority of leaves have not yet reached their full size and are still growing larger. Do not include new leaves that continue to emerge at the ends of stems throughout the growing season.

Colored leaves One or more leaves (including any that have recently fallen from the plant) have turned to their late-season colors. Do not include dried or dead leaves that remain on the plant.

Flowers or flower buds
One or more fresh open or unopened flowers or flower buds are visible on the plant. Include flower buds that are still developing, but do not include wilted or dried flowers.

Open flowers One or more open, fresh flowers are visible. Flowers are "open" when the reproductive parts (male stamens or female pistils) are visible. Ignore the four large, white bracts; watch for the the small flowers in the center to open.

Fruits One or more fruits are visible on the plant. For flowering dogwood, the fruit is berry-like and changes from green when unripe to bright red when ripe.

Ripe fruits One or more ripe fruits are visible on the plant. For flowering dogwood, a fruit is considered ripe when it has turned bright red.

Phenophases not pictured: ***Falling leaves; Recent fruit or seed drop***