



# Whatcom Conservation District

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## Red Osier Dogwood

*Cornus sericea*

**Distribution:** Red Osier Dogwood also known as Red Twig Dogwood is found throughout Washington and the Western U.S. It grows from low valley-bottoms up to timberline.

**Growth Habit:** Red Osier Dogwood is a deciduous shrub that can grow to 20 feet tall, and spread to 20 feet wide. Its lower branches that grow along the ground can root into the ground, often resulting in large thickets.

**Adaptability:** Red Osier is usually found growing in moist soils, often along streams, lakes and swamps. It is occasionally found growing on open, upland forested sites. It tolerates shade, but prefers sun.

**Comments:** Red Osier Dogwood has long been used as a restoration species, as well as an ornamental. Its dense, matting root system makes it useful in stream-side stabilization. It is also an important species for providing forage for deer, elk and moose in the winter. Certain species of birds use its berries as food, while others use the plant for nesting. It has become a popular ornamental species. The red stems provide striking winter interest, and its clusters of small white flowers are showy in spring. The clusters of white berries provide color in late summer, and the leaves turn reddish in the fall.



Courtesy of nwplants.com



Courtesy of Gary Brill