

Silky Dogwood Shrub

Cornus Amomum

The Silky Dogwood is a plant native to Pennsylvania, predominantly shrub-like, and ideal for moist areas in wildlife borders, for stream bank protection, and for erosion control. The species has very good wildlife value in wetlands and damp environments. Silky dogwoods have an unruly growth habit and form dense thickets when left on their own in informal gardens. The shrub is also a plant of Special Value to Native Bees as recognized by The Society for Invertebrate Conservation. Silky dogwoods can help to fight wetland invasive species. Please keep in mind that new seedlings can be a favorite of browsing white-tailed deer and will require a chicken-wire cage for the first several years. See "Follow-Up Care" in paragraph below.

Silky dogwoods require full to partial sun and grow in well-drained moist soils. Don't forget to water the plant well after planting. When mulching around the shrub, do not pile mulch right against the trunk. Allow at least 2 inches of bare ground space to prevent decay and only use native plant bark mulch in its natural colors (no dyes added). Dyed wood mulch does not break down to enrich the soil. Instead, it leaches the dye and its contaminants into the soil, harming or even killing beneficial soil bacteria, insects, earthworms, and sometimes the tree itself.

Silky dogwoods can be planted near black walnut trees if you happen to have one on your property. They can tolerate the allelopathic nature of the black walnut tree as the walnut tree's juglone toxin production attempts to stunt the growth of other trees nearby.

Regarding fertilization of newly planted trees – **DON'T!** For at least the first year, their nutrient needs will be minimal. During the first year, **they are establishing their root systems**, and fertilizer (which stimulates stems and leaves) will not be appropriate. In fact, fertilizer is never really required for these plants unless they are suffering from some disease.

Provide follow-up care. Silky dogwoods like moist soil and should be watered at least once a week during the first year after planting. It can be watered less often during periods of rain but more often during hot, windy weather. Continue watering until late November as lower temperatures require less-frequent watering. Additional controls such as fencing or repellents are recommended for areas with high deer populations. For example, when planting new trees or shrubs you may want to protect them temporarily with small cages taller than the plant to prevent the deer from "tasting" them before they have had a chance to grow. Another way to deter the deer in lieu of cages is deer repellent. Here are two different products that have been proven to be fairly successful:

1. Plantskydd Repellent – a pre-mixed liquid that contains environmentally safe ingredients, and long-term protection when sprayed directly on plants.
2. Deer Stopper – a highly effective but more expensive product that needs to be spray-applied every 30 days. Works by smell and taste, will not wash off, and is pleasant to use, odor free.

Botanical Name	Cornus amomum
Plant Type	Deciduous Mid-size Shrub
Mature Size	6-10 feet tall, 6-12 feet wide
Sun Exposure	Full sun to part shade
Soil Type	Well-drained soils; clay, loam, or sand
Soil Moisture	Moist to wet