

# RED OSIER DOGWOOD

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Beverly Drive in winter can be gloomy, but here and there you see pops of red-colored twigs. The bright red stems of red osier dogwood (*Cornus sericea*), also called “red sticks dogwood,” provide a welcome break in winter's gray.

The plant has more than just winter interest. Its late spring 2-inch clusters of tiny white flowers give way to white berries late in summer. (Most dogwoods have tiny flowers. Even the very showy flowering dogwood tree actually has a cluster of tiny yellow flowers surrounded by large, white bracts that give the tree its beauty.) The dark green leaves in summer turn a red-purple in fall. And when the leaves fall, they give way to those attractive red stems.

Red osier dogwood is fast-growing, reaching a height of 6-9 feet. The stems radiate from the base of the shrub, giving the plant a very upright and densely-branched appearance

Given its success in the marshes along Beverly Drive, it isn't surprising that red osier dogwood prefers medium to wet soils. But it will grow throughout the Beverly Shores area, as long as you give it some water during dry periods. It also requires full to part sun. Red osier is very useful for hedges and screening. In a woodland garden, it can look very attractive planted in front of large evergreens, making the red stems stand out in the winter. There are a number of cultivars that provide an even brighter red stem like “Cardinal” red osier or “Arctic Fire Red” and a more compact shrub like “Bergeson’s Compact” red osier. A red osier with variegated leaves, called “Silver and Gold” is also available but its stems are yellow in the winter instead of red.

The Environmental Restoration Group (ERG) will be glad to help identify plants for you and make suggestions for removal of invasives and for native replacements. Don't hesitate to contact Terry Bonace ([tbonace@gmail.com](mailto:tbonace@gmail.com)) or Candice Smith ([candicepetersonsmith@gmail.com](mailto:candicepetersonsmith@gmail.com)) for assistance. Also please visit our website at [www.bserg.org](http://www.bserg.org) for further information on native and non-native plants.



Red Osier Dogwood twigs



Red Osier Dogwood berries