

# Virginia State Tree

## **Flowering Dogwood** *Cornaceae Cornus florida*

In 1956, Virginia adopted the Flowering Dogwood as its state tree. The Dogwood tree is deciduous. It grows well in wet, moist, or dry environments in a partially shaded area.

Leaf: Opposite, simple, and have veins that are easy to see.

Flower: Very small, but surrounded by 4 large white (occasionally pink) bracts, 2 inches in diameter. What most people think of as the "flowers" of dogwood actually are four large, white (sometimes pink,) petal-like bracts that are notched at the end. The true flower is an inconspicuous, greenish white or yellowish, compact head in the center of the showy bracts. Appearing March to April in southern states, June in northern states.

Fruit: A shiny, oval red berry, 1/4 to 1/2 inch long, in clusters of 3 to 4. Maturing in September to October. They are poisonous to humans, but birds and other wildlife enjoy eating them.

Twig: Slender, green or purple, later turning gray.

Bark: Gray when young, turning very scaly to blocky. The brown to red wood is hard, heavy, strong and very close grained. It is used for clothing machine shuttles and spools as well as for handles and mallets.

Form: A small tree with a short trunk that branches low, producing a flat-topped crown.

Branches: Opposite, and assume a "candelabra" appearance.

Dangers to Dogwood Trees: Lawn mowers and string trimmers cause small lacerations or cracks in bark, sometimes chipping off large pieces. This girdling reduces the amount of conductive tissues that move water and nutrients from roots to leaves, and products of photosynthesis (sugars) from leaves to roots.

Most Common Pest: The dogwood borer, *Synanthedon scitula*, is the most common and destructive pest of Dogwood trees. Borer larvae tunnel and feed in living wood, destroying vascular tissues and causing the tree to become weak, branches die-back and sometimes death of the tree.



(over)

Homework Questions for 9/9/08



*adult dogwood borer*  
*Greatest insect pest which damages Dogwood Trees.*

1. What year was the Flowering Dogwood Tree declared Virginia's state tree? \_\_\_\_\_
2. A Flowering Dogwood Tree grows best in (full sun or partial shade)? \_\_\_\_\_
3. Describe the leaves of the Dogwood Tree. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. What color are the true flowers of the Dogwood Tree?  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. What does the fruit of the Dogwood Tree look like?  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. What color is the bark on a young Dogwood Tree? \_\_\_\_\_
7. As the tree matures, the wood turns to a more brownish red color. Name 4 things that are made from the wood of the mature Dogwood Tree.  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. Describe the crown of the Dogwood Tree.  
\_\_\_\_\_
9. Lawn mowers and string trimmers can cause damage to the Dogwood Tree. When the bark is damaged, it can reduce the amount of tissue that moves water and nutrients from \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_
10. What is the name of the most common pest that the Dogwood Tree has? Explain what it looks like. \_\_\_\_\_  
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