

## Colesville Nursery's "Plant of the Month"

### Cornus sericea (Red or Yellow Twig Dogwood)

The species plants (*Cornus alba*) are indigenous to eastern and central Asia, including some of the stomping grounds of the Tatars or Tartars; thus "Tatarian dogwoods" or "Tartarian dogwoods" is an alternate name for red twig dogwood shrubs.

Red twig dogwood shrubs should be planted somewhere in your yard where they can be easily viewed from a window, to take advantage of their status as top-notch specimen plants for winter landscapes. Use red twig dogwoods in combination with yellow twig dogwoods for an even more stunning winter display. With or without yellow twig dogwoods, red twig dogwoods look best massed together. On a more practical level, the widely-spreading root systems of red twig dogwoods make them effective plants for erosion control.

The brightness of this bush's red twigs has a tendency to fade over time from winter to summer, and there's not much you can do about that. But through proper care, you **can** do something about the fact that the older branches tend to be less colorful than the younger ones. Care for this plant amounts mainly to pruning. For maximal color, prune out 1/3 of the older branches every three years or so. Such care will promote new growth; and since the younger branches bear the brightest color, that's precisely the growth that you want to encourage. Prune in late winter. Zone 3-8



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14011 Nursery Road, Ashland, Virginia 23005 Ph 804.798.5472 F 804.752.6722