**Cornus drummondii**  
**Roughleaf Dogwood**

Edward F. Gilman and Dennis G. Watson

**INTRODUCTION**

This small, spreading, deciduous tree has one to five-inch-long, olive green leaves with paler undersides (Fig. 1). During the summer months, Roughleaf Dogwood produces many off-white, four-petaled, open flowers, and these are followed by many small, round fruits which ripen from August to October. Roughleaf Dogwood forms a dense thicket of intertwined branches, making it ideal for use as a hedge, border, or as a cover for wildlife. At least forty species of birds are known to feast upon the fruits.

**GENERAL INFORMATION**

- **Scientific name:** Cornus drummondii  
- **Pronunciation:** KOR-nus drum-AWN-dee-eye  
- **Common name(s):** Roughleaf Dogwood  
- **Family:** Cornaceae  
- **USDA hardiness zones:** 4 through 9 (Fig. 2)  
- **Origin:** native to North America  
- **Uses:** container or above-ground planter; wide tree lawns (>6 feet wide); medium-sized tree lawns (4-6 feet wide); recommended for buffer strips around parking lots or for median strip plantings in the highway; near a deck or patio; specimen  
- **Availability:** somewhat available, may have to go out of the region to find the tree

**DESCRIPTION**

- **Height:** 15 to 25 feet  
- **Spread:** 10 to 15 feet  
- **Crown uniformity:** irregular outline or silhouette  
- **Crown shape:** oval; upright

1. This document is adapted from Fact Sheet ST-184, a series of the Environmental Horticulture Department, Florida Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida. Publication date: November 1993.

2. Edward F. Gilman, associate professor, Environmental Horticulture Department; Dennis G. Watson, associate professor, Agricultural Engineering Department, Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida, Gainesville FL 32611.
Leaf venation: bowed; pinnate
Leaf type and persistence: deciduous
Leaf blade length: 4 to 8 inches; 2 to 4 inches
Leaf color: green
Fall color: purple
Fall characteristic: showy

Flower
Flower color: white
Flower characteristics: showy; spring flowering

Fruit
Fruit shape: round
Fruit length: < .5 inch
Fruit covering: fleshy
Fruit color: white
Fruit characteristics: attracts birds; no significant litter problem; showy

Trunk and Branches
Trunk/bark/branches: routinely grown with, or trainable to be grown with, multiple trunks; grow mostly upright and will not droop; not particularly showy; tree wants to grow with several trunks but can be trained to grow with a single trunk; no thorns
Pruning requirement: requires pruning to develop strong structure
Breakage: resistant
Current year twig color: green; reddish
Current year twig thickness: medium

Culture
Light requirement: tree grows in part shade/part sun; tree grows in full sun
Soil tolerances: clay; loam; sand; acidic; alkaline; well-drained
Drought tolerance: high
Aerosol salt tolerance: low
Other

**Roots:** surface roots are usually not a problem  
**Winter interest:** no special winter interest  
**Outstanding tree:** not particularly outstanding  
**Invasive potential:** little, if any, potential at this time  
**Verticillium wilt susceptibility:** not known to be susceptible  
**Pest resistance:** no pests are normally seen on the tree

**USE AND MANAGEMENT**

Roughleaf Dogwood should be grown in full sun on well-drained soils. A partially shaded spot at the edge of the woods is also a suitable location.