**Cornus walteri**  
**Walter Dogwood**¹

Edward F. Gilman and Dennis G. Watson²

**INTRODUCTION**

Walter Dogwood is a medium-sized deciduous tree reaching 30 to 40 feet in height and width (Fig. 1). The two to five-inch-long leaves are dark green and are joined in June by the small white flowers arranged in two to three-inch diameter cymes. The blossoms are followed by the production of small black fruits which are popular with birds and other wildlife. Walter Dogwood is probably best known for the alligator-like bark on older specimens, even more so than Flowering Dogwood. Young specimens have an upright branching habit giving way to an open spreading habit. The branches probably droop less than most other Dogwoods, making it a possible candidate for street tree use although they have not been tested for this in the United States. Most certainly a good patio tree providing shade quickly.

**GENERAL INFORMATION**

- **Scientific name:** *Cornus walteri*
- **Pronunciation:** KOR-nus WALL-ter-eye
- **Common name(s):** Walter Dogwood
- **Family:** Cornaceae
- **USDA hardiness zones:** 5 through 8A (Fig. 2)
- **Origin:** not native to North America
- **Uses:** near a deck or patio; shade tree; residential street tree
- **Availability:** grown in small quantities by a small number of nurseries

**DESCRIPTION**

- **Height:** 30 to 40 feet
- **Spread:** 30 to 40 feet
- **Crown uniformity:** symmetrical canopy with a regular (or smooth) outline, and individuals have more or less identical crown forms

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¹ This document is adapted from Fact Sheet ST-199, a series of the Environmental Horticulture Department, Florida Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida. Publication date: November 1993.

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Crown shape: vase shape
Crown density: moderate
Growth rate: fast
Texture: medium

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: opposite/subopposite (Fig. 3)
Leaf type: simple
Leaf margin: serrate; serrulate
Leaf shape: ovate
Leaf venation: pinnate
Leaf type and persistence: deciduous
Leaf blade length: 4 to 8 inches; 2 to 4 inches
Leaf color: green
Fall color: red
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: black
Fruit characteristics: attracts birds; attracts squirrels and other mammals; inconspicuous and not showy; no significant litter problem

Trunk and Branches

Trunk/bark/branches: grow mostly upright and will not droop; showy trunk; should be grown with a single leader; no thorns
Pruning requirement: needs little pruning to develop a strong structure
Breakage: resistant
Current year twig color: green
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; slightly alkaline; acidic; well-drained
Drought tolerance: high

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: long-term health usually not affected by pests

USE AND MANAGEMENT

Grown in the full sun it develops a dense canopy but is more open and perhaps more attractive in partial shade. The plant is now rare in the industry but deserves to be tried. It is highly drought tolerant and grows well in clay soil.

Propagation is by cuttings or seed.

Pests

No pests are of major concern at this time.

Diseases

Possibly leaf spot, twig blight, or canker. See diseases section of Flowering Dogwood.