

*Cornus sanguinea*

[Synonyms : *Cornus latifolia*, *Cornus sanguinea* var. *viridissima*, *Cornus sylvestris*, *Swida sanguinea*, *Thelycrania sanguinea*]

**DOGWOOD** is a deciduous shrub. Native to Europe (including Britain) it has small hawthornish-smelling, creamy-white flowers and leaves which turn purplish-red in Autumn.

It is also known as Bloodtwig dogwood, Bloody twig, Bloody rod, *Blutrüter Hartriegel* (German), Cat tree, Common dogwood, Cornalee, *Cornejo* (Spanish), *Cornouiller sanguin* (French), Cornwood, *Cwyros* (Welsh), Devil-may-care, Dog-berrie tree, Dog-berry, Dogwood cornel, Female cornel, Gaten-tree, Gatterbush, Gatteridge, *Hårdved* (Swedish), *Hartriegel* (German), Hound's-tree, *Hundsbeere* (German), *Mustamarjakanukka* (Finnish), Pegwood, Prickwood, Red dogwood, *Roter Hartriegel* (German), *Roter Hornstrauch* (German), *Sanguinella* (French), *Sanguiñelo* (Spanish), *Sanguinhe legitimo* (Portuguese), Skewerwood, Skiver tree, *Skogskornell* (Swedish), Snakes' cherries, *Svíb krvavý* (Slovak), *Svída krvavá* (Czech), Swamp dogwood, *Vildkornell* (Swedish), Widbin, and Wild cornel; and in flower language is said to be a symbol of beauty, durability, faithfulness, firmness, 'love undiminished by adversity', and stability.

The bitter-tasting seeds yield an inedible oil. The plant was once the source of a green colouring substance known as Vesica green until it was superseded by a synthetic alternative.

Warning – the plant is poisonous and can cause vomiting. It should not be taken internally. Externally some have alleged that the leaves can cause dermatitis.

*Sanguinea* is Latin (of blood, bloody) meaning 'bloody or blood-red' with reference to the colouring in Autumn.

Country people would watch for dogwood's flowering as a sign of an end to frosts.

In France the seed oil is used for making soap.

This hard wood has been used to make arrows, toothpicks, pipe stems, wickerwork and lace-bobbins. Larger pieces have been made into pikes and javelins. Like cornelian cherry (*Cornus mas*) it has also been fashioned into skewers (particularly by gypsies) for handling joints of roast meat, and the twigs have been used for making baskets. In some parts of Europe oil was extracted from the seeds as fuel for lamps and it was believed by some that the wood provided the best gunpowder charcoal.

In veterinary applications a bark mixture has been used to treat mangy dogs.

Medicinally, European medieval herbalists recommended dogwood fruit as a laxative and it is also said to have been used to treat hydrophobia.