



United States Department of Agriculture
Natural Resources Conservation Service
Plant Materials Program

'Indigo'

Silky Dogwood

Cornus amomum Mill

A Conservation Plant Release by USDA NRCS Rose Lake Plant Materials Center, East Lansing, MI



'Indigo' Silky Dogwood in bloom

The USDA-Natural Resource Conservation Service, Rose Lake Plant Materials Center and the Michigan Department of Natural Resources released the cultivar 'Indigo' Silky Dogwood in 1982.

Description

'Indigo' is a spreading shrub that can grow up to 10 feet tall. The stems are red when young but turn reddish brown and gray as they mature. 'Indigo' has yellowish-white flowers that bloom in mid June. It produces an abundant crop of fruit, which ripens in September. The fruit is pale to dark blue and about ¼ inch in diameter. 'Indigo' can be distinguished from other blue fruited species of dogwood by the dark brown pith in one and two year old stems. In other blue fruited dogwoods, the pith is white.



'Indigo' Silky Dogwood berries

Source

'Indigo' silky dogwood seed was first collected in 1961 from plants at the Rose Lake Wildlife Research Station in Clinton County, Michigan. 'Indigo' has been evaluated in 20 states, particularly in the Great Lakes States, where it has performed well.

Conservation Uses

'Indigo' silky dogwood is a dense, multi-stemmed woody plant. It is especially useful for single row windbreaks in fields with center pivot irrigation systems because it grows low enough that the spray bar can pass over it. 'Indigo' can also be used in multi-row field windbreaks and farmstead windbreaks.

Stems and leaves of 'Indigo' are desirable deer browse, and the fruit is eaten by upland game birds and many songbirds. 'Indigo' is also useful for beautification and landscaping.

Area of Adaptation and Use

'Indigo' is adapted to a wide range of soils and soil textures, but it grows best in moist soil. It is adapted to soils that are somewhat poorly drained to well drained and have a pH of 5.0 to 7.0. It is moderately shade tolerant but is not drought tolerant.

Establishment and Management for Conservation

Plantings

Establish plantings of 'Indigo' from seedlings. Two year old seedlings are suitable for mechanical planting. One year old seedlings can be planted by hand, although survival may be low because of their small root system.

Follow the planting date and spacing recommendation for shrubs in your area. Space the plants no more than six feet apart. If planted much later than the recommended planting date, their establishment may be poor unless a moist site is chosen or supplemental water is applied.

To ensure establishment, control weeds mechanically for the first few years. Once 'Indigo' is established, you can use approved herbicides for effective weed control. Be sure to follow manufactures directions carefully. Consult Extension personnel for help in selecting herbicides.

Ecological Considerations

No serious diseases have been observed on 'Indigo' Silky Dogwood plantings. Occasionally there has been an occurrence of webworm attacks.

An infestation of scurfy scale has been observed on some of the plants. The insect can be controlled with a dormant spray or with contact spray when the crawlers emerge in the spring.

In some cases, deer browse damage may temporarily retard the growth of this plant, especially when the browsing of succulent new growth appears. Where plantings are made in grass and cover, rodent damage may occur in the winter.

Seed and Plant Production

Harvest berries in September after they have turned dark blue and soft to the touch. Seeds can be separated from berry with a blender or similar equipment. Seed should be allowed to dry and further cleaned with a fanning mill.

'Indigo' seed benefits from a 12 week stratification treatment to speed germination. Germination of non-stratified seed takes several months longer to complete than stratified seed. 'Indigo' can also be propagated vegetatively. Dormant cuttings ¼"-1/2" thick and 12-24" long can be placed vertically in the soil with 2/3 of the cutting underground and the remainder above ground. Root and shoot formation will occur within a few weeks as weather conditions permit.



'Indigo' Silky Dogwood in bloom

Citation

Release Brochure for 'Indigo' Silky Dogwood, *Cornus amomum*, USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service, Rose Lake Plant Materials Center, East Lansing, MI 48823, October 1982. Revised January, 2012.

For additional information about this and other plants, please contact your local USDA Service Center, NRCS field office, or Conservation District <<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/>>, and visit the PLANTS Web site <<http://plants.usda.gov/>> or the Plant Materials Program Web site <<http://www.plant-materials.nrcs.usda.gov/>>



Row of 'Indigo' Silky dogwood

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