

Tree of the Month:

Satomi Pink Flowering Korean Dogwood *Cornus kousa 'Satomi'*



Everyone loves Flowering Dogwood and rightly so. This group of smaller flowering trees has so much to offer and here on the Pennsylvania Pride nursery we grow several thousand each year of numerous varieties and in several sizes. I am a true fan of Dogwood; I enjoy and appreciate each of the varieties we grow for many reasons. I chose to talk about SATOMI this month because this selection provides so many of the benefits we expect from Dogwoods and is relatively carefree.

Satomi, a pink selection of Korean Dogwood, flowers two to three weeks later than traditional Dogwoods, here on the nursery this is usually around early to mid-May depending on the spring weather of course. Pure medium pink flowers that present themselves well as they lay along the horizontal branching. This simply means we can enjoy the flowers so much more as each bloom seems to be perfectly placed just for you.

I think this may be the best pink available in Korean Dogwood. The Flowers on Dogwoods are actually 'bracts' or modified leaves. The 'true' flowers are so insignificant that bracts are used by the plant to draw in pollinators. The color of these pointed flower bracts can vary from spring to spring. Here on the nursery I have noticed near the end of the flowering period they can fade to lighter pinks, mixed with some white and then in some seasons they are dark dusty pink. In many seasons the flowers seem almost to be variegated in appearance but in all years I am never disappointed. From my experience, several environmental factors effect flower color each season, heat, drought, or cold.

Of course the more established the plant, the greater number of blooms you can expect. We can just about guarantee flowering right away in our #15 6-8' size trees while in our smaller #3 or #7 sizes it may take a season or more to begin to see flowers. Growing Dogwood in containers is our specialty and container grown Dogwoods offer many advantages over balled and burlapped. You can count on our Dogwood to perform right away and get off to a vigorous start in your landscape garden. This is a huge factor in the long term success of Dogwood, traditional southern field grown Dogwoods are difficult to transplant and become susceptible to all kinds of problems during this acclimation period that can take several seasons to overcome. Most all of this is avoided by choosing container grown trees.

Satomi has dark green foliage with red tints and provides OUTSTANDING fall color, an excellent burgundy. And like the flowers, the fall color is long lasting. In addition, Satomi produces large strawberry like red fruit in the fall that birds adore. These fruit are edible for us as well. I have found them to be the sweetest when ripened on the tree and eaten when fully soft. If you choose a Korean Dogwood for the fruit there are other varieties selected that are heavier fruit producers like 'Big Apple'.

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Satomi grows to about 20' high and wide with a strong horizontal branching habit. Planting location is best when the tree can be enjoyed from all sides, but I say that about all trees anyway! Hardy to zone 5 or about -10° to -20° F. Some report having success growing this selection down to zone 3a.

Satomi would enjoy full sun to light shade and likes high heat, they grow better in warm summers than cool so your hottest garden location is appropriate. Of course during the first year of planting regular watering is required but Satomi likes to have dry feet most of the year. Satomi is a slow grower as compared to other trees and is disease resistant. Resistance to Anthracnose is very important; this is the number one cause of failure of Dogwoods in the landscape.

I think it is important for you to understand that if you choose a Pennsylvania Pride grown Satomi Dogwood your chances of success are much higher. Our pruning is done so that any future pruning is minimal if required at all. Planting is simplified being grown in containers and 'time to enjoyment' is minimal. You can experience all the benefits of Dogwood in your garden regardless of past failures. Ask for Pennsylvania Pride Satomi Dogwoods and other great and well-grown trees. Guaranteed!

- Don Eaton
Pennsylvania Pride Grow Team

