

# gray dogwood

## *Cornus racemosa*

Kingdom: Plantae  
Division: Magnoliophyta  
Class: Magnoliopsida  
Order: Cornales  
Family: Cornaceae

**ILLINOIS STATUS**  
common, native

### FEATURES

Gray dogwood is also known as gray-stemmed dogwood or paniced dogwood. This shrub may attain a height of 10 feet. Its opposite, gray-green leaves are simple and entire. Its bark is smooth and light gray. The slender, gray twigs have dark pith. Small, white flowers develop in clusters. The white berries (drupes) produced, each about one-fourth inch in diameter, have red stems.

### BEHAVIORS

Gray dogwood may be found statewide in Illinois. It grows in moist woods, upland woods, dry to wet prairies and along roadsides. Flowers are produced from May through July. Gray dogwood plants grow in clusters that give the appearance of a mound. Several species of songbirds take advantage of the closely-spaced twigs and camouflage of the leaves to build their nest in gray dogwood thickets. The leaves, buds, twigs and fruit of this plant are used as food by some wildlife species. Seeds are dispersed in the waste material of birds and mammals that eat the fruit. Leaves turn red or purple in the fall of the year.

### ILLINOIS RANGE



### leaves and flowers





leaves and flowers

### **Aquatic Habitats**

bottomland forests; wet prairies and fens

### **Woodland Habitats**

bottomland forests; coniferous forests; southern Illinois lowlands;  
upland deciduous forests

### **Prairie and Edge Habitats**

black soil prairie