

NC STATE UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE & LIFE SCIENCES

NORTH CAROLINA COOPERATIVE EXTENSION

Helping
Carolinians
Increase Their
Knowledge of
Gardening,
Manage Their
Landscape
Investment &
Protect the
Environment

JC Raulston Arboretum Plant Focus

Kousa Dogwood Prolongs Spring's Beauty

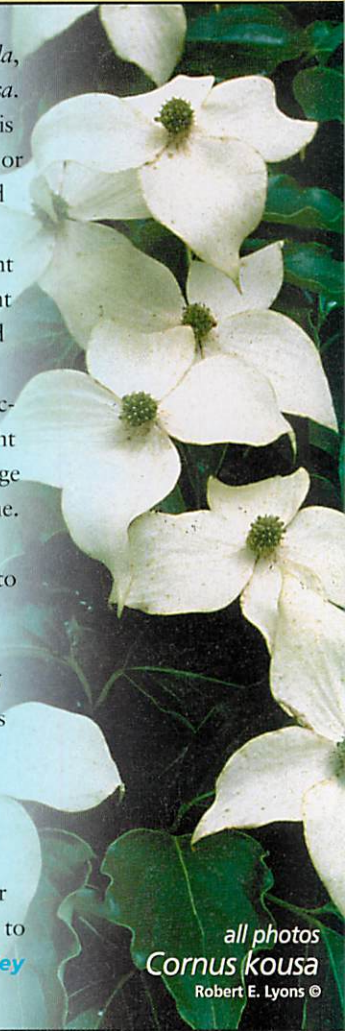
Few plants herald spring like the common flowering dogwood, *Cornus florida*, but the plant that prolongs spring's beauty is another dogwood, *Cornus kousa*. Bursting into bloom two to three weeks after the common dogwood, kousa is a stunning tree with its creamy white flowers and green foliage. The pointed or tapered white petals are actually modified leaves called bracts. They surround clusters of tiny yellow flowers and cover the tree for a striking spring display.

Kousa dogwood is in demand for its grower friendliness and is an excellent substitute for the common flowering dogwood, particularly since it is resistant to the dogwood borer and dogwood anthracnose problems that have plagued the common dogwoods in recent years.

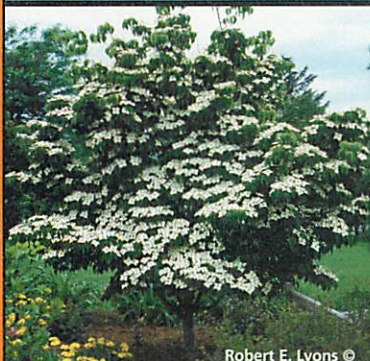
This handsome small tree adds year-round beauty and is particularly attractive in smaller spaces and urban gardens. The bark is initially smooth and light brown, later exfoliating into small patches forming a tan and brown camouflage or mottled pattern. This mottled, exfoliating bark creates interest in wintertime. After bloom in mid-May, kousa's red raspberry-like fruit appears during late summer and hangs down among the green leaves. The edible fruit persists into autumn complementing the purplish-red fall foliage. The fruit is sweet and edible but somewhat mealy.

Kousa grows best in partial shade and will tolerate full sun, growing to 15 to 25 feet with a 25-foot spread. It grows in climatic zones 5 to 8 and prefers being planted in a well-drained acidic soil.

The beloved kousa dogwood will stretch your imagination when you visit the diverse collection of cultivars at the JC Raulston Arboretum (JCRA) at NC State University. From the weeping forms of 'Pendula' and 'Lustgarten Weeping', to the slightly rosy floral display of 'Satomi' and the subtle fall color interest of 'Autumn Rose', you will find that kousa dogwood takes a back seat to nobody! To learn more, visit www.ncsu.edu/jcraulstonarboretum. **David Barkley**



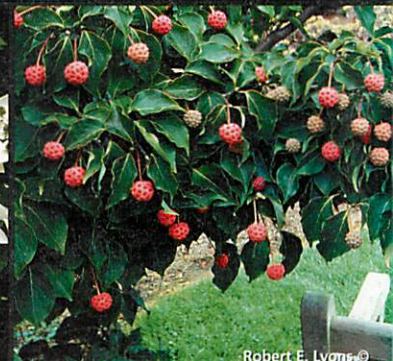
all photos
Cornus kousa
Robert E. Lyons ©



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Successful Organic Gardening

Many homeowners are choosing organic gardening as an alternative to synthetic pesticides and commercial fertilizers. To be successful, organic gardeners must consider many factors including incorporating resistant cultivars, crop rotation, organic matter, sanitation and pest control.

Selecting cultivars that are resistant to or tolerant of disease and insect invasion will help decrease damage. For example, in the vegetable garden plant tomatoes that are resistant to fusarium and verticillium. Rotate crops each year. Pests increase when their host is grown in the same location year after year. For rotation to be successful, avoid rotating plants that are closely related. For example, avoid following tomatoes with peppers as many of the same diseases and insects attack both.

Removing diseased plants will reduce the spread of disease to healthy plants and decrease the areas in which disease organisms can overwinter. Eliminating weeds will further decrease hiding places for pests. Cultivation will expose soil insects to predators, parasites and weather.

The organic gardener's best friends are the beneficial insects that call their garden home. You will have to tolerate some insect infestation to attract

and maintain these natural predators. Artificial introduction is less effective because insects often die or disperse to places outside your yard. Another method to controlling insect infestation is to take advantage of planting dates that protect crops from high risk periods when insects are prevalent. One example is to plant an early maturing variety of sweet corn to avoid earworm problems.

Successful organic gardeners utilize a combination of these methods. For more information, contact your local Cooperative Extension Center.

Helpful Web Sites

www.ces.ncsu.edu/depts/hort/consumer/hortinternet/organic.html.

Visit this site for the publication "Horticultural Oils as Insecticides" or ask your local Cooperative Extension Center to print you a copy.

www.turffiles.ncsu.edu. Look for these publications: "Water Quality and Home Lawn Care" and "Managing Lawns and Gardens to Protect Water Quality."

www.ncstate-plants.net. This site provides a wealth of information for North Carolina gardeners.

Heather Lifsey

A Landscape That's for the Birds

Sharing our landscapes with birds can be quite enjoyable. Bird-watching and nature photography are recreational pursuits enjoyed by many of us, and our children certainly gain a valuable education by observing the natural world around them. Our bird friends add more than beauty to our landscapes, though. They help control pests by consuming them.

Birds need food, water, shelter and places to raise their young. In addition to adding bird feeders, consider the plants you have in your landscape. Natural vegetation provides berries, seeds and insects, all attractive to birds. By selecting plants with staggered fruiting and seeding times, you can come close to providing a year-round food supply.

Ornamental grasses provide shelter and some even produce edible seed. Nectar-producing plants such as lantana, black-eyed

Susan, coneflower and butterfly weed are very popular for attracting hummingbirds. Flowers with tubular red corollas such as red salvia and cardinal flower are especially attractive to these birds. Trees such as oaks, walnuts, pecans, hickories and beeches provide nuts and acorns that are eaten by a variety of birds and they also provide good nesting habitats. Summer fruiting trees and shrubs such as cherries, mulberries, plums, blackberries, blueberries and grapes can be used along with fall fruiting plants like the dogwoods and cotoneasters.

Winter fruiting plants are often the most important when other food is scarce. These include plants such as sumac, crabapple,



hollies and the choke-cherry. Many of these plants will provide not only food but shelter. In addition to plants, open baths, fountains and ponds are all useful.

Garden practices you might consider include checking trees and shrubs

for the presence of nesting birds before pruning. Provide rough vegetation or brush piles at the edge of your yard for shelter. Cut back on the use of pesticides. Many birds feed on insects around the yard and pesticides used to control insects can be harmful to birds. Take time to enjoy the landscape and the wildlife that respond to your efforts of creating an environmentally friendly space for them. *Karen Neill*



There's a large, black bumblebee boring holes in the wood siding and dive-bombing me. Can he sting?

First, this isn't a bumblebee but rather a carpenter bee. Some people call them corn planters because they only show up during corn planting time. Male carpenter bees cannot sting. Their dive bombing behavior threatens sexual competitors but not humans. Females can sting, but rarely do so.

You should control carpenter bees that are boring holes in the house. In barns or outbuildings, I ignore the damage. A tennis racket will provide effective control. Make sure no bystanders are within your effective swinging radius. In addition, squirt a product

containing carbaryl (Sevin), cyfluthrin or resmethrin in any holes. (Don't attempt to spray flying carpenter bees with spray cans of bee and wasp killer.) A few days later, plug the hole with a wooden dowel, steel wool or putty. If you plug without spraying, the bees make another hole. If you spray without plugging, other carpenter bees may move in to overwinter. Overwintering bees attract woodpeckers which cause additional damage. Although carpenter bees prefer bare wood, painted and treated woods are not immune to attack.

David Goforth

ENVIRO- TIP

Consider the Environment: Calibrate Spreader Correctly

Water quality protection, effective pest control, saving money and avoiding plant damage are good reasons to calibrate your spreader. Pesticides and fertilizers applied to your lawn with a spreader that has not been calibrated can be misapplied by 10 percent or more. Calibration requires measuring and adjusting spreader output in order to apply the correct amount of material uniformly over a given area. Calibrate your spreader before its first use, and every fourth use thereafter.

Rotary spreaders and drop spreaders are most commonly used in the landscape. Rotary spreaders are preferred for large areas and are more forgiving of operator error. Drop spreaders have low drift potential and good pattern edge control, which makes them useful for small areas. The application rate and distribution patterns are affected by spreader design, product used, environment and the operator. The operator's walking speed should be

as uniform as possible, reducing the possibility of uneven application of material.

To properly calibrate your spreader, determine the distribution pattern and effective swath width. Drop spreaders will have uniform distribution unless orifices are clogged. Swath width is the width of the surface area covered by the drop spreader. Check rotary spreader patterns over a paved surface to estimate how much overlap should be made between passes to achieve uniformity.

To measure the application rate, follow label guidelines and test over a 100-square-foot area. Be aware that small setting changes can result in large changes in application rates.

For a step-by-step guide, contact your local Cooperative Extension Center to obtain a copy of AG-628, *The Calibration of Turfgrass Boom Sprayers and Spreaders*. This publication will teach you techniques for more precise application of granular fertilizers and pesticides. *Mike Wilder*

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- North Carolina Arboretum, Asheville
- Fee: \$6 Arboretum members; \$8 nonmembers
- Preregister: (828) 665-2492

► **Saturday, April 27**

- 9 a.m. to 10:30
- Central Piedmont Community College, North Campus
- Topic: Pesticide Safety for the Gardener
- Fee: Free, but must preregister
- Preregister: (704) 330-4223

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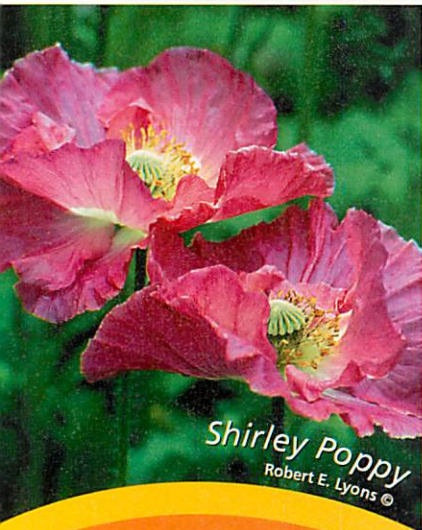
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gardentalk



"Poor indeed is the garden in which birds find no homes."

— Abram Linwood Urban



Shirley Poppy
Robert E. Lyons ©

Garden Spot

The Wilson Rose Garden

is one of the most beautiful attractions in eastern North Carolina. The garden was started in 1992 under the vision of Rufus Swain, the City of Wilson and the Wilson Appearance Commission.

The garden currently contains 160 different rose varieties, ranging from old garden to modern hybrids. Types include old garden roses, English roses, hybrid teas, floribundas, grandifloras, climbing roses, miniatures and shrub roses. The garden incorporates art into various areas. The centerpiece is the 10-foot-tall Georgia marble fountain sculpture by internationally known sculptor Horace Farlowe. Other works of art include those of Wilson sculptor Sherrod Duggan.

Each year, the Wilson Rose Garden hosts "Sunday in the Rose Garden." This year, this event will be on May 19.

The garden is located at 1800 Herring Avenue. Call (252) 399-2262 or visit www.wilson-nc.com/wct_rosegarden.html.

Cyndi Lauderdale

Gardening in April

Lawns

- Cut grass at the appropriate height: centipede at 1 1/2 to 2 inches; St. Augustine at 2 to 2 1/2 inches; zoysia at 1 to 2 inches; common Bermuda at 2 inches; and tall fescue at 3 inches.
- Treat your summer broadleaf weeds with a herbicide before the weather gets too hot.
- Begin seeding or installing sod of warm-season turf such as Bermuda, centipede, zoysia and St. Augustine.

Ornamentals

- Don't set out tender annuals such as impatiens, zinnia, salvia or vinca until the danger of frost has passed. In the Piedmont this is around April 15. On the Coast it's April 10 and in the Mountains it runs about May 5.
- Begin a regular spray program for roses every 10 to 14 days to control black spot, aphids, spider mites and other pests.
- Spray crabapple and apple with Immunox or Banner to prevent the disease cedar-apple rust.
 - Lace bugs will begin to make their first appearance on the foliage of azaleas and pyracantha. Turn the leaf and look for tar spots, a clear indicator of lace bugs. Treat with an insecticide such as Orthene or Merit, or with insecticidal soaps and horticultural oils.
 - Prune spring-flowering evergreen shrubs like camellia, azalea, rhododendron and mountain laurel when they finish blooming.

Edibles

- Spray fruit trees with a home orchard spray to prevent insect and disease damage on the developing fruit.
- Keep strawberry beds mulched to keep down weeds.
- After the danger of frost has passed, plant seeds of beans, cantaloupe, cucumber, squash, sweet corn and watermelon. *Karen Neill*



Extension's *Successful Gardener*SM program provides timely, research-based horticultural information. The newsletter is part of the statewide horticulture program which includes Extension's *Successful Gardener*SM Regional Seminar Series and county workshops. We publish 10 issues per year. Comments concerning *Successful Gardener*SM may be sent to:

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