



'Indigo'

silky dogwood

Cornus amomum Mill.



'Indigo' Silky Dogwood in Bloom

'Indigo' silky dogwood was released in 1982 as a cultivar by the USDA-NRCS Rose Lake Plant Materials Center (PMC) and the Michigan Department of Natural Resources.

Description

'Indigo' is a spreading shrub that grows 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.



Row of 'Indigo' Silky Dogwood



'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

Michigan NRCS technical specialists have determined that 'Indigo' is useful or potentially useful with these Conservation Practice Standards:

- Early Successional Habitat
- Development/Management (647)
- Field Border (386)
- Hedgerow Planting (422)
- Riparian Forest Buffer (391)
- Riparian Herbaceous Cover (390)
- Stream Habitat Improvement and Management (395)
- Streambank and Shoreline Protection (580)
- Tree/Shrub Establishment (612)
- Upland Wildlife Habitat Management (645)
- Wetland Enhancement (659)
- Wetland Restoration (657)
- Wetland Wildlife Habitat Management (644)
- Windbreak/Shelterbelt Establishment (380)
- Windbreak/Shelterbelt Renovation (650)

'Indigo' is especially useful for single-row windbreaks in fields with center pivot irrigation systems because it grows low enough that the span can pass over it. '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 6-feet apart. If planted much later than the recommended planting date, establishment may be poor unless a moist site is chosen or supplemental water is applied.

To ensure establishment control weeds for the first few years. If you use herbicides, be sure to read and follow the label. 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 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 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 than germination of stratified seed. 'Indigo' can also be propagated vegetatively. Dormant cuttings ¼- to ½-inch thick and 12- to 24-inches long can be placed vertically in the soil with ⅔ of the cutting underground and the remainder above ground. Root and shoot formation will occur within a few weeks as weather conditions permit.

Availability

'Indigo' silky dogwood, as well as other Rose Lake PMC releases, is available from commercial suppliers. Rose Lake PMC does not sell releases to the general public, although small quantities of seed are available to commercial seed or nursery growers for increase purposes.

For more information, contact:
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Citation

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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/>>

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