Solutions
Plant
for
Conservation Needs

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INDIGO SILKY DOGWOOD

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Rose Lake
Plant Materials Center

East Lansing, Michigan

'INDIGO' SILKY DOGWOOD

'Indigo' silky dogwood (*Cornus amomum* Mill.) 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 the '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.

Description

'Indigo' is a spreading shrub that can grow 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 1/4 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.

Adaptation

'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 Lake States, where it has performed well. Its natural range of climatic adaptation is shown on the map below.

'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

For help in planning windbreaks of 'Indigo', contact you local Natural Resources Conservation office.

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 dates and spacing recommendation for shrubs in your area; space the plants no more than six feet apart. Plant the seedlings in the spring as soon as the ground thaws. If you plant them much later than the average frost free 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. Several effective herbicides are available, be sure to follow manufacturer's directions carefully. Consult Extension personnel for help in selecting herbicides. 'Indigo' is susceptible to infections of scurfy scale and occasional webworm attacks. Excessive deer browsing may also retard growth.