First Lady Flowering Dogwood

Cornus florida 'First Lady'

Height: 25 feet

Spread: 25 feet

Sunlight: ◐

Hardiness Zone: 6

Description:

A choice specimen tree, featuring yellow variegated foliage, large yet delicate white blooms in spring and excellent wide-spreading form; extremely fussy, requires rich, well-drained acidic soil and adequate precipitation, best with some shelter

Ornamental Features

First Lady Flowering Dogwood features showy clusters of white flowers with white bracts held atop the branches in mid spring. It has attractive yellow-variegated green foliage. The pointy leaves are highly ornamental and turn lemon yellow in fall. It produces red berries from early to late fall. The warty gray bark adds an interesting dimension to the landscape.

Landscape Attributes

First Lady Flowering Dogwood is a multi-stemmed deciduous tree with a stunning habit of growth which features almost oriental horizontally-tiered branches. Its average texture blends into the landscape, but can be balanced by one or two finer or coarser trees or shrubs for an effective composition.

This is a relatively low maintenance tree, and should only be pruned after flowering to avoid removing any of the current season's flowers. It is a good choice for attracting birds to your yard. Gardeners should be aware of the following characteristic(s) that may warrant special consideration;

- Insects
- Disease



First Lady Flowering Dogwood
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder



First Lady Flowering Dogwood flowers
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

First Lady Flowering Dogwood is recommended for the following landscape applications;

- Accent
- Shade

Planting & Growing

First Lady Flowering Dogwood will grow to be about 25 feet tall at maturity, with a spread of 25 feet. It has a low canopy with a typical clearance of 4 feet from the ground, and should not be planted underneath power lines. It grows at a slow rate, and under ideal conditions can be expected to live for approximately 30 years.

This tree does best in a location that gets morning sunlight but is shaded from the hot afternoon sun, although it will also grow in partial shade. Keep it away from hot, dry locations that receive direct afternoon sun or which get reflected sunlight, such as against the south side of a white wall. It requires an evenly moist well-drained soil for optimal growth, but will die in standing water. It may require supplemental watering during periods of drought or extended heat. It is very fussy about its soil conditions and must have rich, acidic soils to ensure success, and is subject to chlorosis (yellowing) of the foliage in alkaline soils. It is quite intolerant of urban pollution, therefore inner city or urban streetside plantings are best avoided, and will benefit from being planted in a relatively sheltered location. Consider applying a thick mulch around the root zone in winter to protect it in exposed locations or colder microclimates. This is a selection of a native North American species.



First Lady Flowering Dogwood foliage
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder