

Strawberry dogwood

Cornus capitata

Family

Cornaceae (dogwood)

Also known as

Dendrobenthamia capitata, Himalayan dogwood, evergreen dogwood, Himalayan strawberry, strawberry tree

Where is it originally from?

Himalayas to Western China

What does it look like?

Small, rounded evergreen tree (up to 6-12 m tall) with hairy branches when young that become hairless, and paired leaves (up to 10 cm long) on short stalks that are paler green underneath and have with prominent veins. Numerous pale yellow flowers consisting of four large petal-like bracts develop in January to February and are followed by almost round fruit (2-4 cm diameter) composed of 30 or 40 pink, fused, roughly six-sided fruits that ripen to red in March to April.

Are there any similar species?

Often mistaken for *Arbutus unedo* (strawberry tree) but is easily distinguished as *C. capitata* has opposite (paired) leaves that lack teeth, and the fruit is not spiky.

Why is it weedy?

Grows rapidly, matures quickly, and can produce a large number of seeds that are widely dispersed by birds. Tolerates harsh conditions such as drought and shade and creates dense thickets by growth (suckering) from a system of underground stems.

How does it spread?

Seed is dispersed by birds.

What damage does it do?

Forms dense thickets in grasslands which crowd out desired grasses, sedges and herbs, and alter wildlife habitat. Shades and crowds out understorey species in tall open forest.

Which habitats is it likely to invade?

Shrubland, forest edges, disturbed forest, wetlands, riparian zones, grasslands, urban areas.

What can I do to get rid of it?

1. Hand pull seedlings (all year round).
2. Cut stems at ground level (spring after bud break and again in summer): repeated treatment may be required.
3. Stump swab (spring-summer): cut stems and swab fresh cut with glyphosate (100-200ml/L).

What can I do to stop it coming back?

Monitor the site and treat any regrowth from the root system or seedlings. Where appropriate plant a local native shrub or tree.



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