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Asiatischer Blüten - Hartriegel

Chinese Dogwood

Cornus kousa var. *chinensis*

Even though the Chinese Dogwood is fully frost-hardy and produces a fascinating sight with leaves and flowers, it is rarely found in the European region. The small tree is slow-growing and builds out horizontal lower branches that grow in tiers and upright-growing twigs at the top. The dark-green leaves are slightly curled and especially in young plants equipped with tiny hairs. During autumn the leaves will change their colouring to bright yellow and scarlet red. In May and June the tree produces big yellowish-white flower heads surrounded by four white leaves. The eatable, dark-pinkish and sweet fruits come out in autumn and taste somewhat like litchis or raspberries.

Natural location: The *Cornus kousa* has its origin in China, Korea and Japan. The species *chinensis* has its natural habitat in China as its name already suggests.

Cultivation: Seed propagation indoors is possible throughout the year. To increase the germinability, you can place seeds in warm water for about 12 hours for priming. Then, plant the seeds about 1 cm deep into moist potting compost and cover the seed container with clear film to prevent the earth from drying out. Don't forget to make some holes in the clear film and take it every second or third day completely off for about 2 hours. That way you avoid mold formation on your potting compost. Place the seed container somewhere bright and warm (for instance near a heater) with a temperature between 25°C and 30°C and keep the earth moist, but not wet. Depending on the propagation temperature, the first seedlings will come up after eight to twelve weeks.

Place: The Chinese Dogwood can be kept in half-shaded or full sunny places. For tub plants as well as for outdoor trees it is advisable to use a soil-mix of sand and peat for cultivation.

Care: *Cornus kousa* needs nutrient-rich soil in the tub as well as outside. It is therefore recommended to regularly fertilize every four weeks with liquid fertilizer.

During the winter: In the first year, the Chinese Dogwood should be kept constantly slightly moist during hibernation, and in an either bright or darker place with a temperature around 0° to 5° Celsius. Later, you may plant it out, while a small protection through earthing up or a layer of brushwood is recommended for the first winter outdoors. After that, the species *chinensis* – as the most resilient within the *Cornus kousa* family – will be fully frost-hardy.

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