

# DOWNNS PARK NATURE NOTES

## AUTUMN ALL-STARS



Two native trees splash reds and oranges around our beautiful woods in autumn: flowering dogwood (above) and persimmon (below).



The small dogwood tree (*Cornus florida*) is actually a delight all through the year. When its leaves drop, you can clearly see the “winter skeleton,” with its gracefully arcing branches. Next spring will come the showy floral display, followed by the tiered foliage of summer.

The persimmon tree (*Diospyros virginiana*) is best known for its fruit, which takes on a pumpkin color as the air turns cool and crisp. Eaten too soon, the fruit will pucker your mouth. Allowed to ripen fully, its taste will remind you of a date. Persimmons are used to make pudding and other desserts, wine, and beer.

The tree, a member of the ebony family, has hard, dark wood.

– Dave Cohn, naturalist volunteer