

# Dwarf flowering almond - *Prunus glandulosa*

## Shrub Profile

By: James Robbins



The dwarf flowering almond (*Prunus glandulosa*) is a tough shrub with a spectacular early spring flower display, no fall color, and no fruits. Thomas Moore summarized this plant best:

*“The hope, in dreams of a happier hour,  
That alights on misery’s brow,  
Springs forth like the silvery almond flower,  
That blooms on a leafless bough.”*

A native to China and Japan, the dwarf flowering almond was introduced in the early 1800s and tends to be found in older gardens. In Harriet Keeler’s book on shrubs written in 1925, she notes that it “was the gem of our grandfather’s garden.” The plant may have become the butt of jokes with serious gardeners when they saw it advertised every Sunday in the newspaper supplement with plants such as hybrid poplar or crown vetch. But the fact is, when this plant is in flower, it is a real showstopper.

In Arkansas, flowering occurs in late March or early April just before or as the new leaves are emerging. Realistically the only form available is the pink, double flowering form, ‘Rosea Plena’ (‘Sinensis’). The  $\frac{3}{4}$ ” diameter flowers are exquisite up close and are similar to small carnation flowers. Flowers cling tightly to every available inch on the twigs. A double white cultivar (‘Alba Plena’ or ‘Alboplena’) is rare. Neither double form produces fruit. Fruit on the single flowering form is dark pink-red and  $\frac{1}{2}$ ” in diameter.

This small, deciduous shrub is typically 2.5’ tall by 4’ wide. Although the plant is more often used by itself in a prominent location in the front yard, a better use for this plant would be a mass near the front of a large shrub bed, just as we might use an azalea. The plant will do best in full sun. There are no serious diseases or insect problems.

During the growing season the plant has a fine texture with small twigs and leaves. The medium-green leaves are easy to identify with fine teeth (serrations) along the margin and a strap-like stipule at the base of the leaf. There is no fall color.



Common Name: dwarf flowering almond

Varieties to look for: none

Flower Color: soft pink, double (showy)

Blooming period: late March/early April

Type: deciduous shrub

Size: small shrub; 3' tall x 4' wide

Exposure: sun

Soil: fairly tolerant

Watering: moist best

When to prune: after flowering

Suggested use: mixed shrub bed

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