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LANDSCAPING & NURSERY

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Redbuds (Cercis)

One of the first signs of spring Redbuds provide a "breath of fresh air after a long winter." (M. Dirr, Manual of Woody Landscape Plants.) In fact, we challenge you to drive North Carolina's highways in early spring and ignore the bright red to pink sprays of color that filter through nearly every naturally-wooded slope. Because these quite adaptable trees do so well in our native heavy clay soils, why not consider adding a few to your own landscape?

Several varieties of REDBUD are available and all have broadly heart-shaped leaves. All but one variety have reddish-purple flower buds that open to bright or almost fluorescent pink flowers that last for about three weeks in March — April. Somewhat irregular in shape because of their zigzag branching pattern, native redbuds (*Cercis canadensis*) can eventually reach heights of more than twenty feet with similar spreads. Growth rates on most are moderate to medium-fast— up to about one and a half feet per year. Tolerant of most soils except extremely wet ones, redbuds also tolerate full sun to medium shade (although they prefer light or filtered shade, they will tolerate full sun and fairly deep shade).

Our favorite REDBUDS include:

EASTERN REDBUD: This is the native tree you will see in North Carolina's woods along the highways. The species variety reaches heights and widths of over twenty feet and is effective as a specimen, in groupings, as a deciduous border or alleé. Very few pests or diseases bother this native tree, and its gray to dark black bark stands out perfectly when coated with our infrequent accumulating snowfall.

FOREST PANSY: Our designers love this variety. As Dirr states: "A very handsome purple-leaf type, the new foliage emerges a screaming, shimmering red-purple and changes to a more subdued color as the season progresses." New foliage actually keeps a deep red-purple color throughout the season and, in lightly shaded conditions, the more mature foliage also exhibits a purple tinge. Otherwise, Forest Pansy exhibits the same characteristics as the native eastern redbud.

CHINESE REDBUD. More of a shrub than a tree, Chinese redbud grows only to about ten feet with an upright character, flowers a little bit earlier than eastern redbud, but exhibits flowers that are truly fluorescent to "black-light" pink. When in flower, we have trouble keeping them in stock.

WESTERN REDBUD: A subspecies of *C. canadensis*, *Cercis Canadensis ssp. Texensis* contains several redbuds with unique characteristics and excellent adaptability to our landscapes.

First, **OKLAHOMA REDBUD** offers all the characteristics of our native redbuds with an extra bonus . . . both its new and mature leaves exhibit a glossy-green color throughout the growing season (unfortunately, our native redbuds tend- to have dull, flat-colored green leaves during

(Continued on page 2)



Redbuds cont.

(Continued from page 1)

the hot months). Oklahoma and our next selection, 'Texas White,' might not reach the full size of our native redbuds.

Second, TEXAS WHITE is unique because its flowers are not pink but white. Everything else about this tree seems to mimic our native redbuds, yet its flowers are white.

Third, TRAVELLER exhibits a beautiful weeping habit. Growing 5' high by 5-12' wide, 'Traveller' has rose-pink flowers and dark green leaves with new leaves emerging copper-red. Truly a worthy specimen.

NEWER VARIETIES

MERLOT: One of the newest purple-leaf redbuds, this hybrid of *C. Canadensis* and *C. texensis* retains its purple leaf coloration better in hot dry weather. The leaves are thicker and glossier than 'Forest Pansy' and mature trees flower heavily. 'Merlot' also sets fewer seed pods than most redbuds, presenting a tidier appearance in the landscape. Grows to 15-20' H and W.

THE RISING SUN: This brilliantly colored redbud welcomes spring with rosy-orchid blooms. New foliage is brilliant apricot-orange, changing to yellow, then speckled lime-green in summer. Growth is vigorous yet compact, growing to 8-12' H x 8' W. Leaves are resistant to summer scorch.

SILVER CLOUD: Beautiful cream-white and pink variegated new foliage, with the variegation becoming to more green in summer. Not as tolerant of full sun as some other varieties and somewhat more sparse in bloom; 'Silver Cloud' is still a worthy specimen in the right location. 25-30' H and W. Availability can be limited.

RUBY FALLS: A dwarf weeping hybrid, 'Ruby Falls' has purple leaves in early summer like its parent 'Forest Pansy', turning green-black in later summer. The weeping habit is narrow, just 6-8' tall and 6' wide at maturity.

HEARTS OF GOLD: A yellow- to chartreuse-leaved form of *C. canadensis*, 'Hearts of Gold' is resistant to leaf burn even in full sun. Matures at 20-25' H and W.



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"Where your imagination takes root"