



Flowering Shrub: Redbud

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Redbuds Flower along the Branches

Cercis canadensis is native to southern Ontario. It is named from the Greek 'kerkis' meaning shaped like a weaver's shuttle. It is both a flowering and ornamental tree. It is an unusual and charming tree for a small garden with a height of 30 feet. One of the first trees to bloom in spring, its tiny blossoms are bunches of 4 to 8 pink blooms huddled along its branches appearing before the leaves.

Native to North America, early settlers added blooms to salads, and used the bark to treat some common illnesses. Carvers used the *Cercis occidentalis* wood for bows.

Varieties to Plant

Eastern Redbud (*Cercis canadensis*) is found from eastern seaboard to the Great Plains. It has a spreading canopy, with multiple trunks and is graceful and open. It is hardy to Canadian Zone 5.

California Redbud (*Cercis occidentalis*) is smaller and has a shrub-like habit, growing to 20 feet. Its flowers are deeper red. The California Redbud is hardy in Canadian zone 8. It is unlikely that this would survive long term in our area.

Cercis canadensis 'Ruby Falls' is a hybrid grown in Canada which is hardy to our zone 4. Its parents are Forest Pansy and "Covey" a weeping variety discovered in 1991 at the private residence of Connie Covey in NY state. It is a very hardy tree, with weeping branches of dark burgundy, heart-shaped leaves turning golden in fall. It grows 10 feet high with a spread of 4 to 8 feet. It tolerates Black Walnut, clay soil, full sun and part shade.

Care and Pruning

Redbuds prefer consistent moisture and should not be disturbed once planted. Prune out dead, diseased, or crossing branches. Keep air flowing through the centre. Any tall shoots on the weeping variety should be pruned back to within the first bud on the main branch or heavy winds may damage the limb due to the weight of the leaves.

Problems you Might Encounter

Verticillium wilt, canker, blight or leaf spots can attack redbuds. Japanese beetles, tree and leaf hoppers and scale can be a problem.

Learn more about Redbuds [here](#)>