

## EASTERN REDBUD

*Cercis canadensis* Common name: Eastern Redbud<sup>1</sup>

**Description:** The native eastern redbud is one of the first trees to flower in North Carolina. It is an excellent small tree, blooming before leaves appear. The foliage is heart shaped and appears soon after flowering. Although the redbud does well in most soil types, it prefers moist, well-drained sites, and is drought tolerant once established. Because redbud has a very shallow root system, planting trees at the proper depth is critical for best performance and survival. It doesn't tolerate root disturbance, so plant right away and keep well watered until established. Redbud often begins growing as a multi-stemmed plant. Early removal of all but one center stem will encourage the typical tree form and avoid the problem of narrow crotches that split from winds or ice. Other than early shaping and trimming off crossing or rubbing branches, the redbud needs little pruning.

**Wildlife Value:** 12 species of Lepidoptera use this tree as a larval host plant. Many bees use this plant. Host plant for Henry's Elfin butterfly. Butterflies and other insects nectar from the flowers. Caterpillars appear from February to May. Adult Henry's Elfin butterflies feed on flower nectar. Songbirds and small mammals occasionally eat the seeds. Nitrogen-fixer.

**Exposure:** Full sun to part shade; prefers some shade in heat of summer.

**Soil:** Clay or sandy soil

**Size:** 20-30 feet tall; 25-35 feet wide

**Zones:** 4A-9B

**Insects, Diseases, or Other Plant Problems:** Leafhoppers, caterpillars, borers, Japanese beetles, treehoppers, scale, and webworms are insects that are pests. Possible diseases include canker, dieback, leaf spots, verticillium wilt, blights, and mildew. Redbuds are very susceptible to *Botryosphaeria* canker and dieback on the branches. Redbuds that are under drought stress will more easily succumb to *Botryosphaeria* canker. Pruning out diseased branches and disposing of cuttings will help to reduce disease. Prune when the stems and foliage are dry. Cut the stem 6-8" below where any sunken, cracked or diseased area is, and disinfect the pruners between cuts with a spray of rubbing alcohol on the pruners. Fertilize them during the spring at six-week intervals with a slow-release tree & shrub fertilizer. Wounds created by pruning or mechanical injury serve as entry points for the fungus that infects the wood and causes cankers. Avoid wounding to minimize susceptibility to this disease. There are no fungicides to control *Botryosphaeria* canker.

For information about gardening or the Extension Master Gardener Volunteer Program of Pender County, contact Tiffanee Boone, Pender County Horticulture & Local Foods Agent at [tiffanee\\_boone@ncsu.edu](mailto:tiffanee_boone@ncsu.edu) or 910-259-1235.



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<sup>1</sup> Sources: NCSU Plant Database: <http://bit.ly/3nGCvLa>; Clemson Coop Extension: <http://bit.ly/2XEDaCs>; Redbud 'Hearts of Gold' a Striking Tree With N.C. Roots, by Amy-Lynn Albertson, NC Cooperative Extension, Rowan County Center. <http://bit.ly/3smxgDU>