UF IFAS Extension UNIVERSITY of FLORIDA

ENH309

Cercis canadensis var. *texensis*: Texas Redbud[1]

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Introduction

Texas redbud is a deciduous tree, native to southwestern North America including Texas, reaches 30 to 40 feet in height with a 15- to 20-foot width, and grows slowly into a rounded or vase shape. It and the Mexican redbud are the best-suited redbuds for the western and central Texas and Oklahoma areas of the country. Young trees are a bit irregularly shaped and benefit from some training and pruning to form an upright, more uniform crown. The incredibly shiny, thick, leathery, dark green leaves have rounded or notched tips, are two to three inches wide, and turn yellow before dropping in the fall. The pink flowers appear in profusion up and down the tree limbs in springtime, well before the leaves begin to emerge. The four-inch-long seedpods that follow are a lovely purple color and remain on the tree well into the winter.



Figure 1. Mature *Cercis canadensis* var. *texensis*: Texas Redbud
Credits: Ed Gilman, UF/IFAS

General Information

Scientific name: *Cercis canadensis* var. *texensis*
Pronunciation: SER-sis kan-uh-DEN-sis variety teck-SEN-sis
Common name(s): Texas redbud
Family: *Leguminosae*
USDA hardiness zones: 5A through 9A (Fig. 2)
Origin: native to North America
Invasive potential: little invasive potential
Uses: street without sidewalk; sidewalk cutout (tree pit); deck or patio; shade; specimen; reclamation; highway median; tree lawn > 6 ft wide; tree lawn 4–6 feet wide; tree lawn 3–4 feet wide; parking lot island > 200 sq ft; parking lot island 100–200 sq ft; parking lot island < 100 sq ft; container or planter
Availability: somewhat available, may have to go out of the region to find the tree



Figure 2. Range

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Description

Height: 25 to 30 feet
Spread: 15 to 25 feet
Crown uniformity: irregular
Crown shape: round, vase
Crown density: moderate
Growth rate: fast
Texture: coarse

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: alternate (Fig. 3)
Leaf type: simple
Leaf margin: entire
Leaf shape: ovate, orbiculate
Leaf venation: palmate, reticulate, brachidodrome, pinnate
Leaf type and persistence: deciduous
Leaf blade length: 2 to 4 inches, 4 to 8 inches
Leaf color: green
Fall color: yellow
Fall characteristic: showy

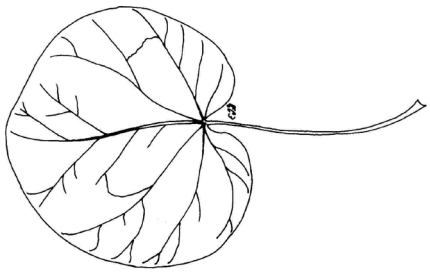


Figure 3. Foliage

Flower

Flower color: pink
Flower characteristics: very showy

Fruit

Fruit shape: pod or pod-like
Fruit length: 1 to 3 inches
Fruit covering: dry or hard
Fruit color: purple
Fruit characteristics: does not attract wildlife; showy; fruit/leaves not a litter problem

Trunk and Branches

Trunk/bark/branches: branches droop; not showy; typically multi-trunked; thorns
Pruning requirement: needed for strong structure
Breakage: susceptible to breakage
Current year twig color: brown
Current year twig thickness: medium
Wood specific gravity: unknown

Culture

Light requirement: full sun, partial sun or partial shade
Soil tolerances: clay; sand; loam; alkaline; acidic; well-drained
Drought tolerance: high
Aerosol salt tolerance: none

Other

Roots: not a problem
Winter interest: no
Outstanding tree: yes
Ozone sensitivity: unknown
Verticillium wilt susceptibility: susceptible
Pest resistance: low resistance to pests/diseases

Use and Management

The tree usually branches low on the trunk and if left intact forms a graceful multi-trunked habit. Be sure to avoid weak forms by pruning to reduce the size of lateral branches. Keep them less than about half the diameter of the main trunk to increase the longevity of the tree. This will reduce branch splitting. The low branching habit makes redbud ideal for use as a specimen, deck, or patio tree, and it is especially suited for planting on 15-foot centers on both sides of an entry walk or long entrance driveway. Unfortunately, disease often shortens its life, but the tree puts on quite a show for a couple of decades, and it is well worth the effort to have to replant at this time.

Texas redbud should be grown in full sun or partial shade on moist, well-drained soil. It is highly drought tolerant once established and grows well in all areas within its hardiness range.

Pests

Treehoppers lay eggs under the bark of twigs. The insect itself is not seen but the white, sticky froth covering the eggs is quite noticeable. Control is usually not needed.

Scale insects can usually be controlled with horticultural sprays if needed.

Diseases

Canker is the biggest problem with redbud. The fungus enters through wounds or dead and dying branches. Dieback begins as a canker on a branch. The cankers, at first small and sunken, enlarge to girdle the branch. Bark in the canker turns black and a crack forms between diseased and healthy bark. Once girdled, the part of the stem beyond the

canker wilts and dies. There is no chemical control. Prune out diseased branches.

Leaf spots can be a problem during wet weather. Since the disease is rarely serious, no chemical controls are suggested.

Verticillium wilt attacks and kills redbud. Fertilize affected trees and prune out wilted branches.