



## *Cercis reniformis* 'Oklahoma' Oklahoma Redbud<sup>1</sup>

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### INTRODUCTION

'Oklahoma' Redbud is a deciduous tree, native to southwestern North America including Texas, which reaches 30 to 40 feet in height with a 15 to 20-foot width, and grows slowly into a rounded or vase shape (Fig. 1). 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 deep pink to red flowers appear in profusion up and down the tree limbs in springtime, well before the leaves begin to emerge, creating probably the best Redbud display. The four-inch-long seedpods which follow are a lovely purple color and remain on the tree well into the winter.

### GENERAL INFORMATION

**Scientific name:** *Cercis reniformis* 'Oklahoma'

**Pronunciation:** SER-sis renn-ih-FOR-miss

**Common name(s):** Oklahoma Redbud

**Family:** *Leguminosae*

**USDA hardiness zones:** 6B through 9A (Fig. 2)

**Origin:** native to North America

**Uses:** container or above-ground planter; large parking lot islands (> 200 square feet in size); wide tree lawns (>6 feet wide); medium-sized parking lot islands (100-200 square feet in size); medium-sized tree lawns (4-6 feet wide); recommended for buffer strips around parking lots or for median strip plantings in the highway; near a deck or patio; reclamation plant; shade tree; small parking lot islands (< 100

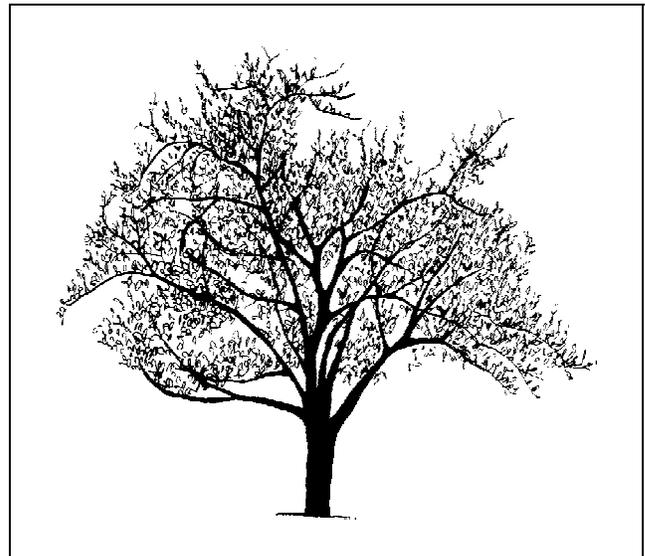


Figure 1. Mature Oklahoma Redbud.

square feet in size); narrow tree lawns (3-4 feet wide); specimen; sidewalk cutout (tree pit); residential street tree

**Availability:** somewhat available, may have to go out of the region to find the tree

### DESCRIPTION

**Height:** 20 to 25 feet

**Spread:** 15 to 20 feet

**Crown uniformity:** irregular outline or silhouette

**Crown shape:** round; vase shape

**Crown density:** moderate

**Growth rate:** fast

**Texture:** coarse

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Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

### Foliage

**Leaf arrangement:** alternate (Fig. 3)

**Leaf type:** simple

**Leaf margin:** entire

**Leaf shape:** cordate; orbiculate; ovate

**Leaf venation:** palmate

**Leaf type and persistence:** deciduous

**Leaf blade length:** 2 to 4 inches

**Leaf color:** green

**Fall color:** yellow

**Fall characteristic:** showy

### Flower

**Flower color:** lavender; pink; purple

**Flower characteristics:** spring flowering; very showy

### Fruit

**Fruit shape:** elongated; pod

**Fruit length:** 1 to 3 inches

**Fruit covering:** dry or hard

**Fruit color:** purple

**Fruit characteristics:** attracts birds; no significant litter problem; persistent on the tree; showy

### Trunk and Branches

**Trunk/bark/branches:** bark is thin and easily damaged from mechanical impact; droop as the tree grows, and will require pruning for vehicular or pedestrian clearance beneath the canopy; routinely grown with, or trainable to be grown with, multiple trunks; not particularly showy; tree wants to grow with several trunks but can be trained to grow with a single trunk; no thorns

**Pruning requirement:** requires pruning to develop strong structure

**Breakage:** susceptible to breakage either at the crotch due to poor collar formation, or the wood itself is weak and tends to break

**Current year twig color:** brown

**Current year twig thickness:** medium

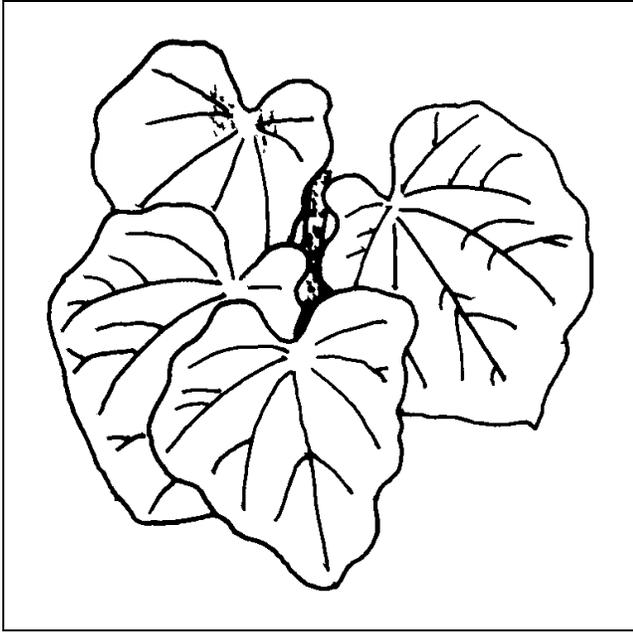


Figure 3. Foliage of Oklahoma Redbud.

### Culture

**Light requirement:** tree grows in part shade/part sun;  
tree grows in full sun

**Soil tolerances:** clay; loam; sand; acidic; alkaline;  
well-drained

**Drought tolerance:** high

**Aerosol salt tolerance:** none

### Other

**Roots:** surface roots are usually not a problem

**Winter interest:** no special winter interest

**Outstanding tree:** tree has outstanding ornamental  
features and could be planted more

**Invasive potential:** little, if any, potential at this time

**Verticillium wilt susceptibility:** susceptible

**Pest resistance:** long-term health usually not  
affected by pests

## USE AND MANAGEMENT

The tree usually branches low on the trunk and if left intact forms a graceful multitrunked habit. Be sure to avoid weak forks by pruning to reduce the size of lateral branches and saving those which form a 'U'-shaped crotch, not a 'V'. Keep them less than 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.

'Oklahoma' Redbud should be grown in full sun or partial shade on moist, well-drained soil. This is one of the nicest (if not the nicest) Redbuds and should be grown by the industry. The glossy leaves always draw attention to the tree even by those unconcerned about trees. It is highly drought tolerant once established and grows well in all areas within its hardiness range.

Propagation is by budding only.

### 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.

Scale insects can usually be controlled with horticultural sprays.

### 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.