



Cercis canadensis var. *texensis* Texas Redbud¹

Edward F. Gilman and Dennis G. Watson²

INTRODUCTION

Texas 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). 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 which follow are a lovely purple color and remain on the tree well into the winter.

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: 5 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

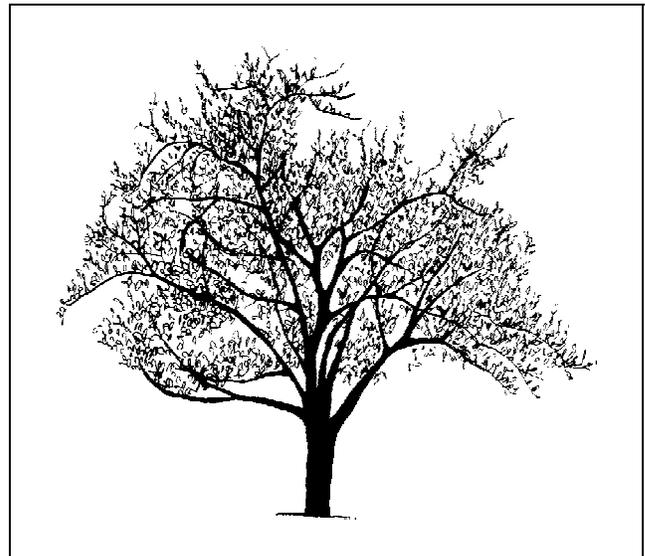


Figure 1. Mature Texas Redbud.

in the highway; near a deck or patio; reclamation plant; shade tree; small parking lot islands (< 100 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: 25 to 30 feet

Spread: 15 to 25 feet

Crown uniformity: irregular outline or silhouette

Crown shape: round; vase shape

Crown density: moderate

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2. Edward F. Gilman, associate professor, Environmental Horticulture Department; Dennis G. Watson, associate professor, Agricultural Engineering Department, Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida, Gainesville FL 32611.



Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

Growth rate: fast

Texture: coarse

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: alternate (Fig. 3)

Leaf type: simple

Leaf margin: entire

Leaf shape: orbiculate; ovate

Leaf venation: banchidodrome; pinnate; palmate; reticulate

Leaf type and persistence: deciduous

Leaf blade length: 4 to 8 inches; 2 to 4 inches

Leaf color: green

Fall color: yellow

Fall characteristic: showy

Flower

Flower color: pink

Flower characteristics: spring flowering; very showy

Fruit

Fruit shape: pod

Fruit length: 1 to 3 inches

Fruit covering: dry or hard

Fruit color: purple

Fruit characteristics: does not attract wildlife; 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

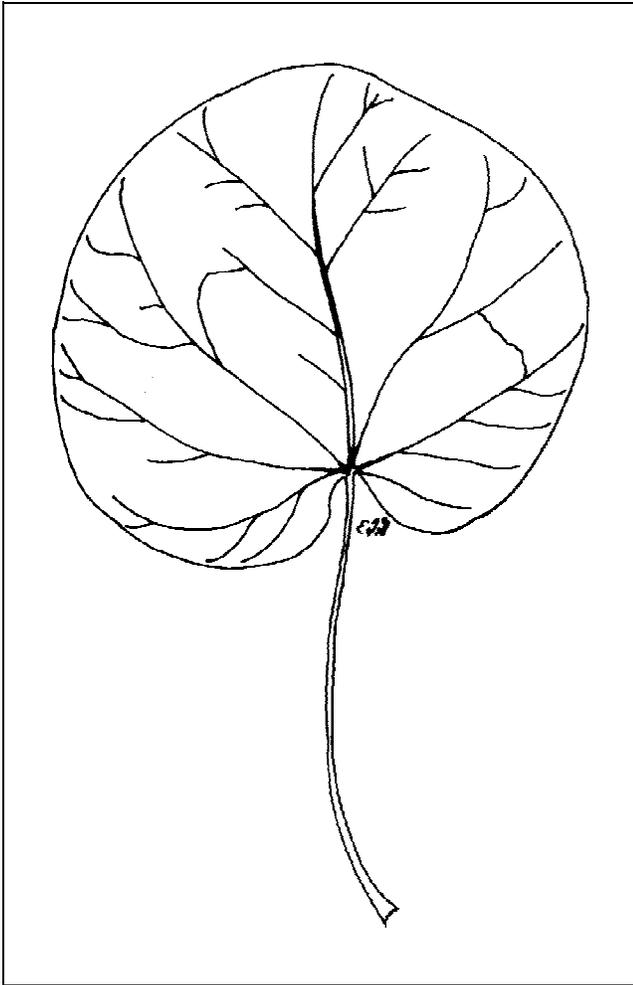


Figure 3. Foliage of Texas Redbud.

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 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.