



Cercis canadensis 'Forest Pansy' 'Forest Pansy' Eastern Redbud¹

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INTRODUCTION

'Forest Pansy' Eastern Redbud is a moderate to rapid-grower, 20 to 30 feet in height, which has red twigs and beautiful, shimmering, purple/red new leaves, which fade to purple/green during the summer in its southern range (USDA hardiness zones 7, 8 and 9) (Fig. 1). The veins on the backs of the leaves are a deep maroon and make a striking contrast with the light grey/green leaf. The splendid, purple/pink flowers appear all over the tree in spring, just before the leaves emerge. 'Forest Pansy' Eastern Redbud has an irregular growth habit when young but forms a graceful, flat-topped, vase shape as it gets older. 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 the lateral branches and save those which form 'U'-shaped crotches, not a 'V'-shaped crotch. Keep them less than half the diameter of the main trunk to prevent branch splitting. This will increase the longevity of the tree.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Scientific name: *Cercis canadensis* 'Forest Pansy'

Pronunciation: SER-sis kan-uh-DEN-sis

Common name(s): 'Forest Pansy' Eastern Redbud

Family: *Leguminosae*

USDA hardiness zones: 6 through 8 (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

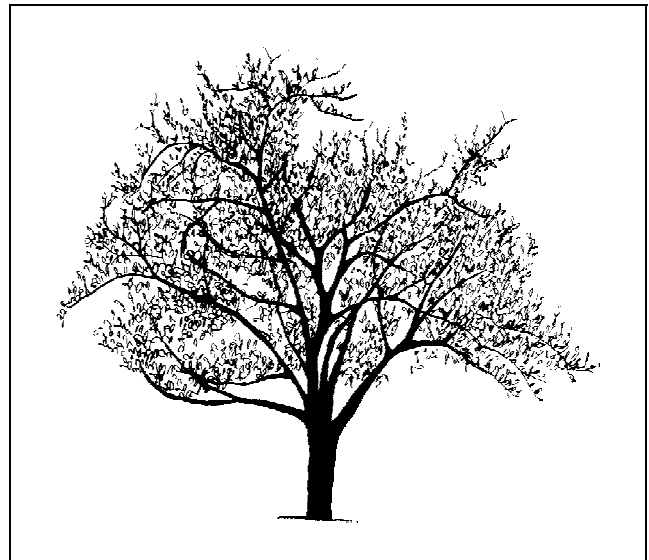


Figure 1. Mature 'Forest Pansy' Eastern Redbud.

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 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 30 feet

Spread: 15 to 25 feet

Crown uniformity: irregular outline or silhouette

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Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

Crown shape: round; vase shape

Crown density: moderate

Growth rate: fast

Texture: coarse

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: alternate (Fig. 3)

Leaf type: simple

Leaf margin: entire

Leaf shape: 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; purple or red

Fall color: yellow

Fall characteristic: showy

Flower

Flower color: lavender; pink; purple

Flower characteristics: spring flowering; very showy

Fruit

Fruit shape: pod

Fruit length: 1 to 3 inches

Fruit covering: dry or hard

Fruit color: brown

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

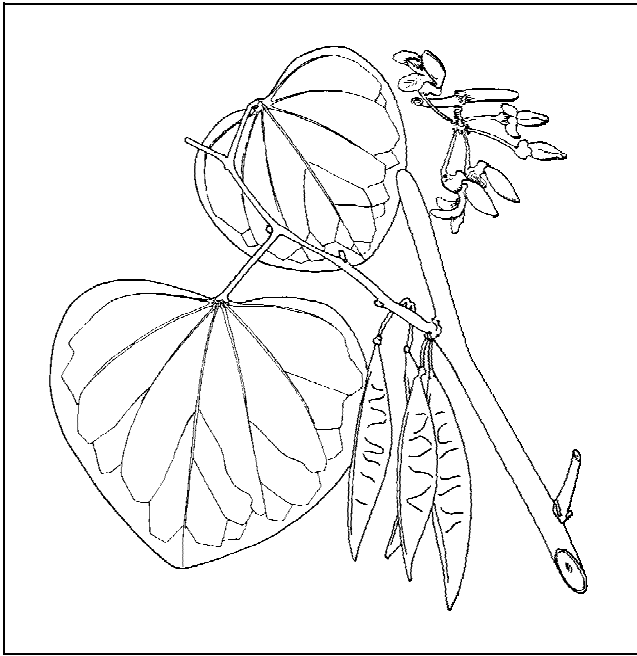


Figure 3. Foliage of 'Forest Pansy' Eastern Redbud.

Culture

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

Soil tolerances: clay; loam; sand; acidic;
occasionally wet; 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

Yellow (although somewhat variable and unreliable) fall color and tolerance to partial shade make this a suitable, attractive tree for understory or specimen planting. Low branching habit makes it ideal for specimen, deck or patio planting, and it is especially suited for planting on 15-foot-centers on both sides of an entry walk or driveway. Best not used as a street tree due to low disease resistance and short life, it is nice in commercial and residential landscapes, or as an accent in a shrubbery border.

Eastern Redbuds grow well in full sun in the northern part of its range but will benefit from some shade in the southern zones, particularly in the lower mid-west where summers are hot. The best growth occurs in a light, rich, moist soil but Eastern Redbud adapts well to a variety of soils, including sandy, clay or alkaline. Trees look better when they receive some irrigation in summer dry spells, particularly if the tree is planted in an area where the roots are confined. Young trees survive best when transplanted in the spring or fall but containerized trees can be planted anytime. Eastern Redbud fixes its own nitrogen, so only light (if any) nitrogen fertilizer is recommended. The beans provide food for some birds. 'Forest Pansy' may be less adapted to drought than the species.

Propagated by cuttings.

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.

Webworm can devour leaves on portions of the tree.

Diseases

Canker is the biggest problem with Eastern 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 Eastern Redbud. Fertilize affected trees and prune out wilted branches.