

Eastern Redbud Tree

Cercis canadensis

The Eastern Redbud Tree is usually one of the first trees to bloom in spring. The blooms are rosy pink and beautiful. Flowering occurs in March to May before leaf growth. After bloom, the leaves begin growing and gradually turn dark green. When mature, the alternately arranged leaves are about four inches long, four inches wide and heart shaped. The twigs are slender, spreading, zigzag with short or dark brown knotty spurs. This tree is also a member to the Legume Family (pea family). It is mostly an ornamental tree. The flowers on this tree attract bees and butterflies.

The Redbud tree has a lot of history. It was voted state tree in Oklahoma in 1937. It is sometimes known as the Judas tree because it dates back to biblical times. George Washington really liked the Redbud tree and transplanted some seedlings onto Mount Vernon.

Native Americans boiled the bark to make tea to treat whooping cough. Dysentery was treated using an astringent from the bark. The roots and inner bark were utilized for fevers, congestion and vomiting. They also used the Redbud wood for their bows. The flowers can be fried and eaten, and have been said to taste good in salads.

The Eastern Redbud is a native to eastern and central North America from Connecticut to New York to southern Ontario and the Great Lakes south to Western Texas and Florida. It's a deciduous tree which grows 15 to 30 feet tall and spreads 15 to 25 feet.

Twenty-six Redbud trees now line the entrance to the Salt Lake City Cemetery in honor of the Sandy Hook victims.

