

Eastern Redbud Tree

Cercis canadensis

The Eastern Redbud is a tree native to Pennsylvania, a multi-trunk tree covered with pretty pink blooms in late winter before the leaves start to appear. The species tend to have a short lifespan (on average, 20 -30 years) because of disease, pest attacks, and other environmental factors. Despite this drawback many people find that the beauty of this small tree makes it well worth planting. Some redbud trees may live up to 50-70 years. They have a moderate growth rate, about 7 to 10 feet in the first five or six years. Redbuds can grow up to 30 feet tall and 25 to 35 feet wide. Redbuds are drought tolerant and they attract hummingbirds and butterflies. Please keep in mind that Redbud seedlings can be a favorite of browsing white-tailed deer and will require a chicken-wire cage for the first several years. See "Follow-Up Care" in paragraph below.

Redbuds require full to partial sun and grow in well-drained moist soil, although full sun encourages optimal flowering. Don't forget to water the tree well after planting. When mulching around the tree, do not pile mulch right against the trunk. Allow at least 2 inches of bare ground space to prevent decay and only use native plant bark mulch in its natural colors (no dyes added). Dyed wood mulch does not break down to enrich the soil. Instead, it leaches the dye and its contaminants into the soil, harming or even killing beneficial soil bacteria, insects, earthworms, and sometimes the tree itself.

Redbud trees can be planted near black walnut trees if you happen to have one on your property. They can tolerate the allelopathic nature of the black walnut tree as the walnut tree's juglone toxin production attempts to stunt the growth of other trees nearby.

Regarding fertilization of newly planted trees – **DON'T!** For at least the first year, their nutrient needs will be minimal. During the first year, **they are establishing their root systems**, and fertilizer (which stimulates stems and leaves) will not be appropriate. In fact, fertilizer is never really required for these plants unless they are suffering from some disease.

Provide follow-up care. Redbud trees like moist soil and should be watered at least once a week during the first year after planting. It can be watered less often during periods of rain but more often during hot, windy weather. Continue watering until late November as lower temperatures require less-frequent watering. Additional controls such as fencing or repellents are recommended for areas with high deer populations. For example, when planting new trees or shrubs you may want to protect them temporarily with small cages taller than the plant to prevent the deer from "tasting" them before they have had a chance to grow. Another way to deter the deer in lieu of cages is deer repellent. Here are two different products that have been proven to be fairly successful:

1. Plantskydd Repellent – a pre-mixed liquid that contains environmentally safe ingredients, and long-term protection when sprayed directly on plants.
2. Deer Stopper – a highly effective but more expensive product that needs to be spray-applied every 30 days. Works by smell and taste, will not wash off, and is pleasant to use, odor free.

Botanical Name	<i>Cercis canadensis</i>
Plant Type	Deciduous Tree
Mature Size	20-30 feet tall, 30-35 feet wide
Sun Exposure	Full sun to part shade
Soil Type	Well-drained, sandy and clay
Soil Moisture	Dry to moist