Plant of The Month November 2024: Eastern Redbud (Cercis Canadensis)

Photo Sources: treebute.com,
http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/publication/ST145

Native to Southern Ontario, the Eastern Redbud (Cercis Canadensis) is a multi-stemmed deciduous tree growing to a maximum height of 20-30'. This Spring blooming tree is valued for its showiness as unlike many other plants, it flowers before it leaves. A value to gardeners, its pink flowers and heart shaped leaves entice many.

Leaves emerge after the blooms fade and this understory tree tolerates a variety of soils; adapting to both acid and alkaline. Fall colours exude pale green and yellow, bursting gold and bright yellow when exposed to brightest conditions.

DETAILS:

Growing Conditions:
Sun: Sun to Part shade
Water: Moist, Good drainage
Maintenance: Low
Tolerates: Many soil types, except permanently wet, adaptable to acid and alkaline, not drought/heat resistant
Zone: 4a – 9b

Description / Characteristics:
Height x Spread: 20-30' x 20-25'
Bloom time and description: Spring, clusters of rose pink to light purple, ½"
Fruit: flat pod, 2" long, 1/2" wide, green fading to brownish black

Pests & Disease: Not especially vulnerable to pests and disease.
and Japanese weevil. Redbud is a host to a variety of insects, including Insect pests such as the leaffolder, borers, scale, cicada but damage is not normally severe. Possible diseases include canker, wilt, anthracnose. Sap and heart rots also affect Eastern Redbud.

Propagation: Seed 

Special value:

Created: Jan 7 2004; J. Haynes

Particularly resistant to deer, black walnut, and clay soils. Tolerant to a wide range of site conditions.

Attracts bees, butterflies, pollinators.
12 species of Lepidoptera use this tree as a larval host plant for Leafcutter bees (such as Megachile rotundata) and other bees. Host plant for Henry's Elfin butterfly. Butterflies and other insects obtain nectar from the flowers. Adult Henry's Elfin butterflies feed on flower nectar. Flowers are regarded as important in the production of honey by bees.

Songbirds and small mammals occasionally eat the seeds. Cardinals have been observed feeding on the seeds, and seeds have been consumed by ring-necked pheasants rose-breasted grosbeaks, and bobwhites. White-tailed deer and gray squirrels have also been observed feeding on the seeds.

First Nations people revere this tree for many uses. In their herbal pharmacy, it's bark is used to make a tea to treat whooping cough. Roots and inner bark aid in alleviating fevers, congestion and vomiting. The flowers are edible and packed with vitamin C. As it's one of the first plants to flower in the spring, historically the blossoming branches were brought into the homes to "drive winter out".

Toxicity: mild
Common Names: Judas Tree, Redbud
Origin: Native to eastern North American from Mexico north. Natural range in Canada uncertain, probably native in Canada on Lake Erie's Pelee island