A SPRING MINI-WALK
IN KENDAL CROSSLANDS ARBORETUM,
KENDAL CAMPUS

Native to Kennett Square is one of the loveliest and most charming trees you will ever see -- the Eastern or American Redbud (*Cercis canadensis*). In spring, when in full bloom, there is neither equal nor competitor that brightly dominates our landscape. Up and down the Eastern seaboard as well as westward to Wisconsin and south to Texas, redbud inhabits open woodlands, forested margins, old fields, and along the edges of rocky streams. When its clustered, magenta red buds open to reveal blankets of rosy pink flowers, it truly is a treasure in the April countryside. Inconspicuous in summer and winter, redbud shows us in spring how common it really is. The genus *Cercis* is one of the Featured Collections of the Kendal Crosslands Arboretum (see attached map of the Cercis Collection). The Kendal Campus has planted 17 different varieties which demonstrate the redbud’s broad range of leaf color, flower color, and habit. Redbud is a member of the Pea Family, *Fabaceae*, and is related to Honeylocust, Kentucky Coffeetree, Black Locust, and Wisteria.

To observe and appreciate a few of the redbuds in the KCA Collection, take a short walk on paved surfaces between the west end of the Kendal Center and the Worth Center Parking Lot. Attached is a map of the highlighted walk and full descriptions of the numbered trees you will observe along the way. In case you wander off the beaten path, all numbered trees in the collection carry a full description. AND be sure to take another walk a few weeks later to appreciate the remarkable range of leaf coloration that occurs among the different redbud varieties.
TREE #1  *Cercis canadensis* (Eastern Redbud; American Redbud)

The small, 1/2” wide flowers are pea-like, appear in clusters on the leafless branches, and bloom in April for 2 to 3 weeks. The magenta pink flowers are soon followed by waxy, purplish green new leaves that quickly turn to a softly shining, dark blue-green in summer and then a clear bright yellow in fall. The leaves are 3 to 5” long and have a uniquely appealing heart shape. Soon after flowering, 3” long pea-like, seed-pods develop, persisting through winter almost to spring. This dapper and low branching tree with a flat-topped to rounded crown grows in hardiness zones 4 to 9, reaching 20 to 30 feet tall with a 25- to 35-foot spread. George Washington noted in his diary that he enjoyed the lovely sight of redbuds in the surrounding woods and on many occasions transplanted redbuds from those woods into his Mount Vernon garden.

Regular watering, fertilizing, and pruning out dead branches will help keep the tree healthy and growing vigorously. Unfortunately leaf anthracnose, dieback, and *Verticillium* wilt can be significant disease problems.

There are nine species of redbuds known in the world with two native to North America, the Eastern Redbud (*Cercis canadensis*) and the Western Redbud (*Cercis occidentalis*). *Cercis canadensis* has four botanical varieties which occur in nature: var. *canadensis* (the typical form), var. *mexicana* (a smaller shrubby form with a rounded leaf), var. *texensis* (a compact tree form with glossy leaves), and var. *orbiculata* (a West Coast native, shrubby in habit). Plant breeders have been capitalizing on the redbud’s innate genetic diversity by producing cultivars that offer variations in foliage color, flower color, and tree habit.

TREE #2  *Cercis canadensis* ‘Ace of Hearts’  

This cultivar is an unusual selection of our native redbud, where the habit is half the size of the species, reaching only 12 feet high and 11 feet wide. Growth is typically shrubby with a dome-shaped crown. The small, broadly heart-shaped foliage is also half the size and each leaf looks exactly like the “ace of hearts” in a deck of cards. The arrangement of the foliage is also noteworthy. The leaves appear densely stacked and overlapping along the stems. The shiny, dark green leaves turn yellow in fall. Flowers are lighter in color, a lavender-rose-pink, and are borne in great abundance in mid-spring. Selected out of a group of seedlings in 2006 by plantsman Paul Woody of Morganton, NC.
TREE #3  *Cercis canadensis* ‘Alley Cat’  
[Near Croquet Court under white pines]

A variegated redbud! ‘Alley Cat’ has green foliage that is prominently speckled with white, and best of all it is stable (does not revert to green) and does not scorch in sun. Leaves emerge a copper pink and soft green and as they mature the white variegation begins to appear. The pea-like flowers are a dark pink. Plantsman Allan Bush of Jelitto Seeds found ‘Alley Cat’ in an alley near his home in Kentucky. This is a large redbud that will mature to 20 to 30 feet high and 25 to 35 feet wide.

TREE #4  *Cercis canadensis* ‘Appalachian Red’  
[3 trees, near Worth Parking Lot]

Although promoted as having a red flower, the flowers of 'Appalachian Red' are such a deep purplish fuchsia that they appear to be red, especially when first emerging from bud – but still not a true red! Very floriferous, 'Appalachian Red' blooms later than most cultivars -- its neon bright flowers open along the bare branches well before the glossy, heart-shaped, blue-green leaves appear. Discovered growing along a roadside in Maryland by plantsman Max Byrkit and introduced into horticulture by the University of Tennessee. Reaches 15 to 25 feet tall and about as wide.

TREE #5  *Cercis canadensis* f. *alba*  
[3 trees, west of Kendal front entrance]

Ironically called the “white redbud”, f. *alba* occurs naturally in the wild and is similar to the species *Cercis canadensis*, however instead of magenta pink flowers it has showy, pure white blossoms. The typical, pea-like flowers bloom profusely from late March into early April before the foliage appears. The flowers emerge in clusters along the bare branches. Heart-shaped leaves open a reddish purple, mature to a lustrous dark green in summer and turn yellow in fall. Grows 20 to 30 feet tall with a slightly larger spread.
TREE #6  *Cercis canadensis* ‘Pink Heartbreaker’  

This elegant weeping form of Eastern redbud has a brilliant lavender-pink spring bloom as well as a solid upright leader with a strong and wide-spreading branching habit. Large clusters of pea-like flowers appear along the naked branches in April. After flowering, the new heart-shaped leaves emerge red in color, change to dark green as summer approaches, and then turn a clear yellow in fall. With age it will develop into a distinctly upright and narrow habit, reaching around 12 to 15 feet high and 8 to 10 feet wide. ‘Pink Heartbreaker’ was selected and introduced into horticulture in 2009 by Pennsylvania nurseryman, Donald Eaton of Eaton Nursery in Leesport, PA.

TREE #7  *Cercis canadensis* ‘Ruby Falls’  

‘Ruby Falls’ is a dwarf, weeping specimen with a compact and elegant habit. Noted for its velvety purple leaves that are displayed on weeping branches. It creates a most colorful display from early spring into early summer and from a distance it appears as almost black. By midsummer the leaves change to a bronzy green. Rosy purple flowers emerge in early to mid-April before the foliage appears. Bred at North Carolina State University in 2009, this stunning dwarf reaches just 6 to 8 feet high and less than 6 feet wide at maturity. ‘Ruby Falls’ is a hybrid between *Cercis canadensis* ‘Covey’ (a green foliaged, weeping form) and *Cercis canadensis* ‘Forest Pansy’ (Tree #13).

TREE #8  *Cercis canadensis* var. *texensis* ‘Oklahoma’  

This variety of Eastern redbud hails from the far western area of its native range – Texas, Oklahoma, and northern Mexico. Leaves are thick, leathery, and a lustrous green with undulating margins and turn a golden orange in fall. Flowers are a dark wine red. Var. *texensis* is more heat resistant than the species, has red-tipped new growth, and typically has a shrubbier more compact habit with thicker and more rigid stems. It also tends to be more drought tolerant,
however it lacks the degree of winter hardiness typical of the species (Zone 6 compared to Zone 4). The cultivar ‘Oklahoma’ was selected for its darker flowers and its richer green and glossier foliage. Discovered in the Arbuckle Mountains of Oklahoma in 1964 and named by Warren & Son Nursery of Oklahoma City, OK. Will mature to around 12 to 18 feet high and 12 to 18 feet wide.

**TREE #9  Cercis ‘Merlot’**

Selected for its attractive shiny, purple leaf color and semi-upright, vase-shaped growth habit when compared to the open, spreading habit of the original purple cultivar, ‘Forest Pansy’ (Tree #13). Leaves of ‘Merlot’ are also smaller and thicker than those of ‘Forest Pansy’, and maintain their attractive purple color well into the latter part of the growing season. ‘Merlot’ has excellent branching with dense growth, and is shorter in stature. Flowering is prolific and flower color is an attractive reddish purple. This hybrid *(Cercis canadensis var. texensis ‘Texas White’ x Cercis canadensis ‘Forest Pansy’)* was bred at North Carolina State University, introduced in 2010, and is much more drought- and heat-tolerant than our Eastern redbud. Matures to around 12 to 15 feet high and wide.

**TREE #10  Cercis canadensis ‘JN2’ The Rising Sun™**

This cultivar is grown for its outstanding, eye-catching, and most amazing foliage that resembles the colors of a rising sun. In spring the large, heart-shaped leaves are a bright apricot color when first emerging, change to a bright golden yellow, and then turn a bright green as they mature. However new apricot-colored leaves, sometimes with a hint of red, keep emerging all summer so there is always a mix of colors on the tree….and the foliage holds this color all through fall. Small, pink, pea-like flowers appear in clusters on the naked branches in April. Very heat tolerant and resistant to foliage burn even in full sun. The Rising Sun is a smaller tree, growing 10 to 12 feet tall with a 10- to 15-foot spread.

Discovered and selected in 2010 by Jackson Nursery of Belvidere, TN.
'Royal White' was discovered as a seedling of *Cercis canadensis* f. *alba* (Tree #5) in 1940 by plant breeder Mr. Royal Oakes of Bluffs, Illinois. In comparison, 'Royal White' is a more compact tree, blooms earlier in the season, is more floriferous, and produces larger flowers. The heart-shaped young leaves are bronze-colored, mature to a dark green, then turn to shades of yellow in the fall. The white, pea-like flowers appear in clusters all along the naked branches. Since the tree was found in Bluffs, Illinois, it possesses superior cold hardiness. Mature size is about 15 to 25 feet high and 15 to 25 feet wide.

**TREE #12  Cercis chinensis**

Commonly called the Chinese redbud, *Cercis chinensis* is native to woodlands, thickets, and slopes in central to southern China. This tree will grow to as much as 50 feet tall in its native habitat, but under cultivation in the U.S. it usually grows much smaller as an open, densely branched, multi-stemmed shrub or small tree, 8 to 15 feet tall and 5 to 12 feet wide. It is somewhat similar in appearance to *Cercis canadensis*, except Chinese redbud have larger, vivid rose-purple flowers, glossier leaves, longer seed pods, shorter mature height, less attractive fall color, and less winter cold hardiness (Zones 6 to 9). Nevertheless, the two species can sometimes be difficult to distinguish from each other. Clusters of tiny, bright rose-purple, pea-like flowers bloom profusely on the stems, branches, and even trunks for 2 to 3 weeks in early spring (March-April) before the foliage emerges. It is one of the first redbuds to show color and is one of the last to finish flowering. Rounded, leathery, heart-shaped green leaves (to 5" long) are attractive during the growing season but rarely turn a respectable yellow in fall. Flat, bean-like, pendulous seed pods (to 5" long) mature in late summer. Introduced from China into the United States before 1850.

**TREE #13  Cercis canadensis 'Forest Pansy'**

A shimmering purple-leafed cultivar with deep purple-pink flowers! Before the leaves appear in mid-spring, pea-like, rosy purple blossoms cover the tree’s bare branches. The new leaves emerge deep purple, unfortunately the color gradually fades as temperatures increase during the growing season, so that by late June to early July the color has
changed to a dull bronze green. However, fall colors are a spectacular mix of yellows, purples, and reds. The graceful, heart-shaped leaves are 4 to 8 inches long and 2 to 4 inches wide. This deciduous tree grows 15 to 20 feet tall with an equal spread and typically has an irregular and open growth habit when young, but transforms into a graceful, flat-topped, vase-shaped tree with age. One of the very first purple-leaved cultivars, ‘Forest Pansy’ was discovered in 1947 as a chance seedling at the former Forest Nursery in McMinnville, Tennessee.

TREE #14  Cercis canadensis var. texensis ‘Traveller’  [Front Entrance]

*Cercis canadensis var. texensis*, inhabits the western to southern portion of the Eastern redbud’s (*Cercis canadensis*) native range -- primarily in Texas, Oklahoma, and Mexico. It differs from the more easterly Eastern redbud in having smaller, glossier, and usually hairier leaves with wavy edges, more of a tendency to have red seedpods, and a smaller more compact stature. It also tends to be more drought tolerant and heat tolerant, however it lacks the degree of winter hardiness typical of the species (Zone 6 compared to Zone 4).

The cultivar ‘Traveller’ was selected for its attractive, weeping, growth habit as well as its glossy, leathery leaves. Fruit set has never been observed. Flowers are a rich lavender and new leaves emerge a coppery green, aging to a dark green. Grows to 5 feet tall with a spread of 5 to 12 feet. ‘Traveller’ was discovered as a chance seedling in a row of trees at Madrone Nursery, San Marcos, TX.

TREE #15  Cercis canadensis ‘Hearts of Gold’  [Ambulance Entrance, behind K57]

This stunning, golden-leaved cultivar was discovered by a former JC Raulston Arboretum employee growing in a private North Carolina garden in 2002 and is the first yellow-foliaged redbud to hit the market. Another distinguishing feature is its ability to produce flower buds on one-year old whips whereas flower buds on most other cultivars appear only after two or three years. Clusters of tiny, reddish purple, pea-like flowers bloom for 2-3 weeks in early spring (March-April) before the
foliage emerges. Fruits are rarely produced. Semi-glossy, broadly ovate, heart-shaped leaves (to 3 to 5” long and as wide) emerge with orange-red coloration before maturing to bright gold. Golden leaves gradually pale to chartreuse or yellowish green as the heat of the summer progresses. It slowly matures into a vase-shaped habit and reaches about 20’ tall with a 30-foot spread.

TREE #16 Cercis canadensis ‘NCC1’ Carolina Sweetheart®
[Along promenade behind K217]

One of the loveliest, most colorful redbuds available! In early to mid-spring, rosy purple flowers open along its stems, creating a spectacular effect. The color show continues when its graceful, heart-shaped leaves emerge. The variegated leaves open to shades of pink, red, white, purple, and green. Eventually the leaves turn green during the heat of the summer. Growing 20 to 30 feet tall with a 25- to 30-foot spread, this lovely redbud has a beautiful umbrella-like growth habit. Developed as a collaborative project between North Carolina State University and the North Carolina Nursery & Landscape Association.

TREE #17 Cercis canadensis ‘Little Woody’
[Lot 11 Bioswale, front of K212]

‘Little Woody’ was selected for its distinctive dwarf habit, vase-shaped habit, and its textured, small leaves. It matures to about 10 to 12 feet tall and to 8 to 10 feet wide and requires no pruning to maintain its vase-shaped habit. Clusters of tiny, purplish, pea-like flowers bloom for 2 to 3 weeks in early spring (March-April) before the foliage emerges. The rather small, thick, heart-shaped leaves, 2” long and 3” wide, are a dull bluish green in summer but turn yellow in fall. Characteristically the foliage is quite wrinkled and puckered. Fruit/seeds are rarely produced. 'Little Woody' was selected in 2000 by plantsman Paul Woody from a mass planting of Cercis canadensis in Morganton, NC.
CERCIS COLLECTION – KENDAL CAMPUS

CERCIS KEY:

1. Cercis canadensis
2. Cercis canadensis ‘Ace of Hearts’
3. Cercis canadensis ‘Alley Cat’
4. Cercis canadensis ‘Appalachian Red’
5. Cercis canadensis f. alba
6. Cercis canadensis ‘Pink Heartbreaker’
7. Cercis canadensis ‘Ruby Falls’
8. Cercis canadensis var. texensis ‘Oklahoma’
9. Cercis canadensis ‘Merlot’
10. Cercis canadensis ‘JN2’ [The Rising Sun™]
11. Cercis canadensis f. alba ‘Royal White’
12. Cercis chinensis
13. Cercis canadensis ‘Forest Pansy’
14. Cercis canadensis var. texensis ‘Traveller’
15. Cercis canadensis ‘Hearts of Gold’
16. Cercis canadensis ‘NCC1’ [Carolina Sweetheart®]
17. Cercis canadensis ‘Little Woody’