

NC STATE UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE & LIFE SCIENCES

NORTH CAROLINA COOPERATIVE EXTENSION

Helping
Carolinians
Increase Their
Knowledge of
Gardening,
Manage Their
Landscape
Investment &
Protect the
Environment

JC Raulston Arboretum Plant Focus

Eastern Redbud: Plant This Springtime Winner Now

When naturalists and gardeners think of spring, our native redbud tree has to come to mind. One of North Carolina's most underrated small flowering trees, the eastern redbud, *Cercis canadensis*, is native from northern Florida to New Jersey.

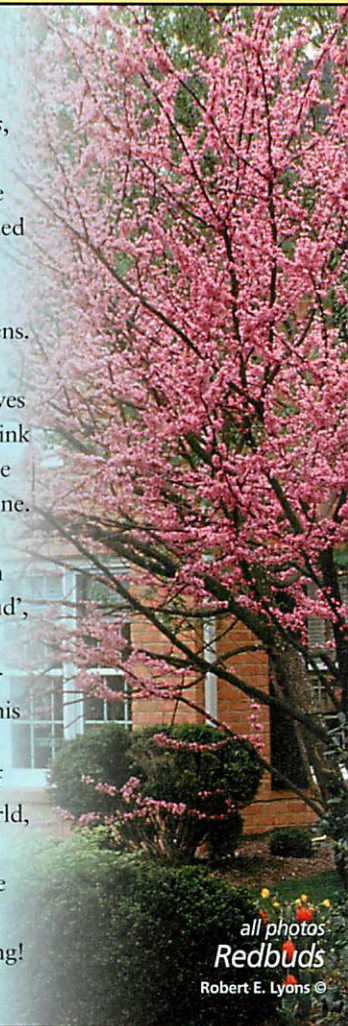
Effective as a single specimen plant or in groupings in a shrub border, the redbud has a place in nearly every landscape. It is especially nice in naturalized and woodland locations.

Eastern redbuds grow in a wide range of soil types except those that are continuously wet. Their adaptability makes them well-suited for home gardens. They will grow 25 to 30 feet in height with a spread of similar distance.

The highlight of this small tree's gardening year is early spring before its leaves unfold. Eastern redbuds have reddish purple buds, which open to a purplish pink flower. Some years their bloom coincides with another showy native tree, the white flowering dogwood. Together they create a spring display second to none.

Today there are many new redbuds in the North Carolina nursery trade. Among those available are 'Forest Pansy', with its purple foliage; 'Alba', with white flowers; 'Appalachian Red', with bright rosy pink flowers; 'Silver Cloud', with green and white variegated foliage; and 'Covey', an extraordinarily attractive weeping form. These, along with additional cultivars from another redbud subspecies, the Texas redbud, *Cercis canadensis ssp. texensis*, make this an exciting landscape tree for Carolina gardeners.

The JC Raulston Arboretum at NC State University in Raleigh has one of the most comprehensive collections of redbuds in the country, if not the world, and visitors can view each of the above cultivars there. This collection has recently undergone extensive renovation, propagation and review to relocate it away from the McSwain Education Center, currently under construction. Visitors will still be greeted with a lovely and diverse display during the spring! To learn more, access www.ncsu.edu/jcraulstonarboretum. **John Vining**



all photos
Redbuds
Robert E. Lyons ©

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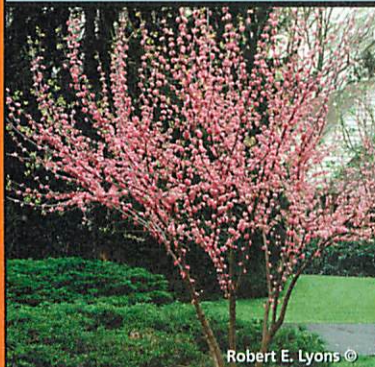
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'Rembrandt Style' Tulip



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'Monsella' Double Tulip



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Daffodils

gardentalk

"I long for the bulbs to arrive, for the early autumn chores are melancholy, but the planting of bulbs is the work of hope and always thrilling."

— May Sarton



Plant a Rainbow This Fall

Perhaps there should be a tribute to the patience of gardeners. Just think of all those gardening souls who plant a myriad of bulbs now in order to reap a rainbow of colors next spring. While bulbs make their appearance in garden centers in early fall, it's best to wait until the weather cools off to plant them. That may mean buying them early while the selection is good and holding them in a cool area below 60 degrees until planting time, which is usually late October or early November in North Carolina.

When you purchase bulbs, make sure they are firm and free of decay. Small nicks in the bulb or loose skins are not detrimental. Remember that the nicest flowers will come from the largest bulbs.

When selecting bulbs, consider whether you want bulbs that will perennialize, such as many of the daffodils, or are you only looking for some color next spring? In our climate, tulips offer beautiful color but do not do well year after year, unless you plant each fall. For guidance on planting and caring for bulbs, contact your county Cooperative Extension Center and request the publication from NC State University titled "Hints for Fall-Planted Spring and Early Summer-Flowering Bulbs." You also can find it on the Web at www.ncstate-plants.net.

Another fine source is Clemson University's information leaflet on *spring-flowering bulbs*, which provides excellent detail on bulb types and their respective varieties. For instance, have you ever been confused by the many types and varieties of daffodils? This leaflet explains the differences between jonquil daffodils, tazetta daffodils, poets narcissus and species daffodils, and provides numerous variety suggestions. If you want large-flowered varieties which will naturalize, they list 'Accent', 'Barret Browning', 'Carbineer', 'Ceylon', 'Ice Follies', 'Mount Hood' and others. Find this leaflet on the Web at <http://hgic.clemson.edu>.

Tulips provide spectacular flowers. With good soil preparation and variety selection, some will come back more than one season. But often, they provide only one seasonal display before they decline. Hybrid tulips are also broken into various groups – single late tulips, Darwin hybrids, lily-flowered and the species tulips. Some of the Darwin hybrids may be best known to many gardeners. These are tall varieties with large blooms such as 'Apeldoorn' and 'Golden Apeldoorn'.

The Clemson leaflet also provides suggestions on hyacinths, crocuses and a number of other bulbs. If you don't have access to the internet, contact your Cooperative Extension agent who can print a copy for you. **Kevin Starr**

Green Your Thumb in the Extension Master Gardenersm Program

Have you ever wanted to learn more about gardening? The Extension Master Gardenersm program is an educational program – one of Cooperative Extension's premier volunteer organizations – designed to enhance public education in consumer horticulture. Master Gardenerssm provide education to county citizens concerning lawns, fruits, vegetables, trees and ornamentals.

If you are eager to learn about gardening and have the time to volunteer, the Extension Master Gardenersm program may be for you. Cooperative Extension agents train county residents in horticulture, typically during the fall or spring months. The training class explores all aspects of gardening, from botany and soils to turf grass,

landscaping and plant pests. Most programs include hands-on learning and field trips.

Participants in the program must complete the training program, pass an examination and volunteer a minimum of 40 hours per year (20 hours in subsequent years) through the local Cooperative Extension Center. Volunteer hours can be achieved through various means such as plant clinics, telephone hotlines, working in display gardens and making presentations to community organizations and youth.

Seventy-six of the 100 counties in North Carolina offer the Extension Master Gardenersm program. There are currently over 3,000 active Master Gardenerssm in the state.

Being a Master Gardenersm can be very rewarding. Not only do you learn more about gardening, you have the opportunity to help your community. For more information, contact your county Cooperative Extension Center. **Cyndi Lauderdale**

Q&A What ate the roots off my nandina?

Voles. In addition to nandina, voles love aucuba, apple trees, liriope and various flower bulbs. These rodents spend nearly all of their lives underground. Holes to the surface will be about 2 inches in diameter with no soil piled on the surface. Trapping or poisoning are the only effective control options. Voles can be trapped with standard mousetraps placed under the cover of flowerpots, or other overhead cover that blocks out all light. Place traps crosswise to the direction of the run-

ways. Locate traps on a 10-foot by 10-foot grid in the landscape. Bait with apples or potatoes. Trap at least one week after the last vole is caught. In North Carolina you can also use a rodenticide, with the active ingredient of chlorophacinone (Rozol). Dropping Rozol pellets into the runs will not work. Apply the rodenticide according to the label directions in covered locations in the runways, with 10-foot spacing. Bait until the bait stops disappearing. Rebait in 21 to 30 days to catch the ones that were just weaning and didn't feed the first time. *David Goforth*

Plant a Tree to Strengthen America

In remembrance of those who died in the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, Cooperative Extension Master Gardeners encourage North Carolinians to plant memorial Trees of Strength. Trees planted at public and private sites will serve as a living memorial to those who died and honor those who protect and defend our country.

North Carolina Cooperative Extension's county centers are supporting

the effort by providing information on selecting and planting trees appropriate for the state's different regions. Master Gardener volunteers will register all trees.

"As these young trees grow strong, they will stand for many years to come as a tribute to America's strength," says Erv Evans, the state's Master Gardener coordinator at NC State University. "Groups and individuals are invited to participate by planting trees at local airports, fire and police stations, as well as homes."

Trees of Strength will be marked by red, white and blue curling ribbons or bows.

For information, contact your county center of North Carolina Cooperative Extension. *Dee Shore*



ENVIRO-TIP

Use Plants to Help Control Erosion

Soil erosion is a primary source of sediment that clouds streams and fills reservoirs. It is a major agricultural, municipal and industrial problem throughout the world. Soil erosion losses are measured in tons per acre.

Fast-moving water is a major cause of erosion. A primary consideration in erosion control is proper grading and drainage. Critical slope gradients to consider in the landscape:

- 1% is the workable minimum slope on hard surfaces for shedding surface stormwater.
- 2% is the minimum slope which will move water effectively when covered by vegetation.
- 3% is the angle at which you first notice being on a hill.
- Slopes that are steeper than 3% require some method to reduce the velocity of moving water.

Consider using retainer walls, terraces or swales on very steep slopes. Many techniques, such as extruded pavers, silt basins, erosion control matting, synthetic fiber mulches and concrete culverts, are available to reduce erosion. However, the technique that beats all of these is the good, old-fashioned method – plants. A mass planting of dense groundcovers or low-

growing shrubs set out across the face of a slope will develop a heavy, fibrous mat of roots to slow down the flow of water. Possible plants include grass, ivy, euonymus, dwarf Japanese yew or heavily textured low-growing junipers. Almost any plant will work.

Though there is no one answer for all conditions, vegetation helps control erosion in five ways.

- Vegetation absorbs the energy of splashing raindrops, thereby reducing runoff.
- Vegetation decreases surface velocity by forming diversions or barriers.
- Plant roots and residue restrain soil movement.
- Plant roots and residue improve the soil aggregation and porosity, which improves infiltration and reduces runoff.
- The transpiration of plants decreases soil moisture, resulting in greater water storage capacity of the soil.

Maintain healthy turf and keep well-mulched beds with plantings of groundcovers, perennials, vines and woody ornamentals. Build rain gardens or bioretention areas to reduce runoff. While not the only method for holding soil in place, well-established vegetation can be the solution to your problem. *Mike Wilder*



Robert E. Lyons ©

Juniper





Pyracantha coccinea
(Firethorn)
Robert E. Lyons ©

Garden Spot

Tryon Palace, the historic home and garden of North Carolina's Royal Governor William Tryon, was the state's first colonial capitol. Destroyed by fire in 1798, Tryon Palace was rebuilt in 1952 using the original architectural renderings. The gardens, reconstructed using design elements of the 18th and 19th centuries, are formal with boxwood hedges and manicured lawns on 13 acres. The gardens come alive during the autumn when they are planted with hundreds of chrysanthemums. Color is added with bulbs and annuals during other seasons.

A couple of the most striking features are the walled gardens, typical of that era, and the tree allees. A stroll through the Wilderness Garden, which stretches to the Trent River, gives visitors a chance to discover plants that the early colonists encountered upon their arrival.

The garden is located on Pollock Street in New Bern. For more information call (800) 767-1560 or visit www.tryon-palace.org. **Cyndi Lauderdale**

Gardening in November

Lawns

- Cool-season lawns may be fertilized with one pound of actual nitrogen per 1,000 square feet.
- Keep leaves removed from lawns. A leaf blower is the safest way to remove leaves from newly seeded areas.
- Once warm-season lawns are completely dormant, winter annual weeds such as annual bluegrass can be treated with a nonselective herbicide.

Ornamentals

- Plant trees, shrubs and groundcovers.
- Remove dead foliage from perennials and mulch beds lightly.
 - Both broadleaf and needled evergreens can be pruned during the dormant season. It is best to save severe pruning until February or March.
 - Plant spring-flowering bulbs. In the Mountains, complete planting before the end of the month. Coastal gardeners can continue to plant bulbs in December. Tulips and hyacinths are not good choices for naturalizing in North Carolina.

Put leaves into a compost pile along with grass clippings and other green material.

Edibles

- Remove asparagus ferns after they are killed by frost.
- If a soil test indicated the need for lime, this is a good time to work the recommended amount of lime into the garden soil so the pH will be adjusted in time for spring planting.
- Garlic can still be planted, especially in Coastal areas.
- Plant lettuces and greens in a cold frame to enjoy throughout the winter.
- Repair, clean and oil garden equipment before putting away for the winter.

Linda Blue



Tune in to "Making It Grow!" – a gardening show featuring Extension agents from the Carolinas. Saturdays, noon, WTVI 42, Charlotte

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For a list of garden centers where you can find *Successful GardenerSM*, please call (704)336-2561 or visit Cooperative Extension on the web at <http://www.ces.ncsu.edu>

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