

EXTENSION'S Successful Gardener

NC STATE UNIVERSITY NORTH CAROLINA COOPERATIVE EXTENSION



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

JC Raulston Arboretum Plant Focus

Redbud 'Hearts of Gold' a Striking Tree with N.C. Roots

The native eastern redbud, *Cercis canadensis*, is one of the first trees to flower in North Carolina. Its purple flowers adorn woodland edges and disturbed roadside habitats. The foliage is heart shaped and appears soon after flowering. The redbud is an excellent small tree – it grows 20 to 30 feet tall – and performs well in full sun or light shade. Redbud will tolerate a wide range of soil types, although soils near neutral pH are preferred. It requires well-drained soils, and is drought tolerant once established. Redbud can be difficult to establish, however, particularly bare-rooted trees. Small potted plants are the easiest to establish and late fall to early spring dormant planting is best. Because redbud has a very shallow root system, planting trees at the proper depth is critical for best performance and survival.

Redbud often begins growing as a multistemmed plant. Early removal of all but one center stem will encourage the typical tree form and will avoid the problem of narrow crotches that split from winds or ice. Other than early shaping and trimming off crossing or rubbing branches, the redbud needs little pruning.

'Hearts of Gold' is a new cultivar discovered by former JC Raulston Arboretum employee Jon Roethling in a North Carolina landscape. This outstanding and unique form of our eastern redbud is distinguished by its striking, intense golden-yellow spring foliage that gradually changes to chartreuse as the summer advances. The light purple flowers are plentiful in each cluster. The actively growing shoot tips take on an orange-red tone, making a distinct contrast to the older, chartreuse-colored leaves. 'Hearts of Gold' will express its gold color more effectively in full sun. It is a small redbud, only reaching a height of 12 to 15 feet after five years of growth. With its small stature, golden heart-shaped leaves and tidy canopy, this redbud makes a wonderful small tree for groupings near the edge of natural woodland settings or as a single specimen.

'Oklahoma,' another popular cultivar, is a 2008 Showstopper Plant. See www.successfulgardener.org for more information. *Amy-Lynn Albertson*



Cercis canadensis
'Hearts of Gold'
JC Raulston Arboretum ©

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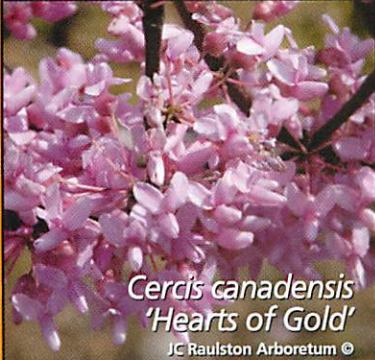


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Garden Spot



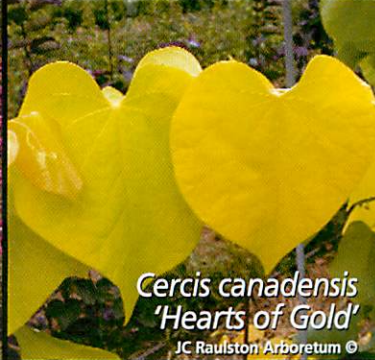
www.ces.ncsu.edu



Cercis canadensis
'Hearts of Gold'
JC Raulston Arboretum ©



Cercis canadensis var.
texensis 'Oklahoma'
JC Raulston Arboretum ©



Cercis canadensis
'Hearts of Gold'
JC Raulston Arboretum ©



Robert E. Lyons ©

Clematis 'Perle D'Azure'

Robert E. Lyons ©

Wisteria 'Amethyst Falls'

Robert E. Lyons ©

Clematis x jackmanii

Robert E. Lyons ©

Lonicera belgica

Twirling, Twining Vines Add Landscape Interest

Vines have long been a part of our landscapes, serving many purposes from aesthetic to functional. North Carolina provides many different growing environments conducive to a variety of attractive vines.

There are three general types of vines. All support themselves as climbers by twining, by attaching root-like structures to walls or by attaching to objects by tendrils. Understanding their growth habits and how they attach themselves to nearby objects will help determine what type of support system to put in place. The use of a fence, arbor or wall is a normal means of support. Keep in mind the structure at some time will require maintenance. Likewise, the vine will need your attention from time to time.

Evergreen or deciduous vines are available. Some vines produce flowers. Before selecting a vine for your landscape, do a little research. It's important to know growing requirements. Some vines grow best in the eastern part of the state while others give their best performance in higher elevations in the west. Will your vine of choice perform at its peak in sun, shade or a mix of the two? Some vines are grown for fall leaf color or for their unique stem structure after the leaves have fallen off for the winter, thus adding the extra visual effect depending on the season. In some

settings, vines help reduce the energy demands of the home. Proper placement of vines and other plants can help modify the climate around the

home, reducing the workload of the heating and cooling system.

Be aware of the invasiveness of certain vines when selecting and placing them in your landscape. A vine that has created problems in the past is the Chinese wisteria,

Wisteria sinensis, by

its aggressive growth and reseeding ability. An alternative wisteria is the native wisteria, *Wisteria frutescens* 'Amethyst Falls'. Do your part and research the plant before placing it in your landscape. An invasive vine has the potential to impact your neighbors and community.

Several vines for consideration include the native vines such as Carolina jessamine 'Pride of Augusta' (*Gelsemium sempervirens*); cross vine 'Tangerine Beauty' (*Bignonia capreolata*); and *Wisteria frutescens* 'Amethyst Falls'. A couple of nonnatives are *Clematis* spp. and moonvine (*Ipomea alba*), which is a night bloomer. Another nonnative is *Lonicera sempervirens* 'Leo', which is long-blooming with a red to orange-red flower.

To learn more, visit <http://www.ces.ncsu.edu/depts/hort/hil/hil-633.html>. **Stephen Greer**

Before selecting a vine for your landscape, do a little research. It's important to know growing requirements.

2008 Perennial Plant of the Year

The Perennial Plant Association has awarded *Geranium* x 'Rozanne' the title of Perennial Plant of the Year®. *Geranium* 'Rozanne' is a natural hybrid cultivar of *G. wallichianum* 'Buxton's Variety' x *G. himalayense*. The plant was discovered by Donald and Rozanne Waterer in 1989 in their Somerset, England, garden. This cultivar is a strong-performing hardy geranium that has 2.5-inch iridescent violet-blue flowers with purple violet veins and white centers. The plant blooms



Steven Still/Perennial Plant Association ©

Geranium x 'Rozanne'

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Q&A

What is Colony Collapse Disorder?

Pests, parasites and pathogens have been putting local honeybee hives at risk for decades. Colony Collapse Disorder (CCD) is the latest threat to these important insects. CCD was first reported in the winter of 2006-2007 when commercial honeybee operations in 35 states experienced severe, unexplained colony losses. Healthy hives inspected in the fall quickly declined over the winter leaving only a queen with a small cluster of young worker bees and plenty of food inside the hive.

Recent research has found the Israeli Acute Paralysis Virus (IAPV) may be associated with colonies affected by CCD. This does not mean that IAPV is the cause of CCD, but it is listed among various contributing factors. Other causes under investigation include pesticides, poor nutrition, a new disease or a combination

of existing diseases and parasites.

Beekeeping is important for honey production, which is a \$200 million per year business in North Carolina. Through pollination, bees contribute to the production of crops like nuts, berries, fruits and vegetables, a \$15 billion business annually across the U.S. Become a friend to this important insect by supporting local beekeepers (or becoming one yourself) and by identifying insects before reaching for a can of insecticide. Honeybees are more interested in flowers than they are in you. They also look and act differently from wasps, hornets, yellow jackets and other stinging insects.

Contact your county Cooperative Extension Center, local beekeepers association and the Mid-Atlantic Apiculture Research and Education Consortium Web site <http://maarec.cas.psu.edu> for the latest information. **Mark Blevins**

Plant of the Year

continued from page 2

profusely from late spring through November or until frost. *Geranium x 'Rozanne'* has deep green foliage that will turn reddish brown in fall, and has a mounded habit. It is considered one of the longest flowering plants of all the hardy geraniums. 'Rozanne' is unlike many geraniums in that it has very good heat tolerance and grows vigorously without ever becoming invasive, thus it rarely needs to be divided. 'Rozanne' grows best in full sun to partial shade. With an afternoon shade location the plant will perform much better in warmer microclimates. The size of the plant ranges 20 to 24 inches tall and 24 to 28 inches wide. Iris, phlox, heliopsis and ornamental grasses are all very good companion plants for *Geranium x 'Rozanne'*.

Scott Ewers

ENVIRO-TIP

The Right Plant Helps Reduce Diseases and Insects

Falling in love with a plant is so easy. As a gardener, this probably happens every time you go to the garden center. Whether it is the foliage, the flower, the shape, size or fruit that makes you want a particular plant, do your homework first to see if that plant is really suited for the location you have in mind.

Each plant has special growing requirements that when taken into consideration will help to ensure success. These requirements address the plant's ability to withstand environmental conditions such as cold temperatures, humidity (or lack of), sun, shade, water (or lack of), soil type and wind. When all of these growing requirements are taken into consideration prior to selecting a plant, the chance for success increases. To further ensure success, plant varieties that have been bred for disease and insect resistance will reduce the need for extra preventative pest management.

North Carolina is characterized as having three general plant hardiness zones: 6 in the mountains, 7 in the piedmont and 8 at the coast. A plant hardiness zone map helps categorize a region by the average annual minimum temperatures. The lower the number on the hardiness scale, the lower the average minimum temperatures of the region. Find out what the plant hardiness zone is for your region and the range of hardiness for a plant before making a selection.

Conduct a thorough inventory and analysis of your property to identify the existing conditions. Choose plants based on how well adapted they are to those conditions. You will find that there are many wonderful plants available that will thrive under the environmental conditions on your property, have the desired plant characteristics you seek, and have few insect and disease problems. **Michelle Wallace**



Robert E. Lyons ©

Gardentalk

"A doctor can bury his mistakes but an architect can only advise his clients to plant vines."

Frank Lloyd Wright





Gardening in April

Lawns

- Mow tall fescue lawns to a 2.5- to 3-inch height. Research shows that mowing to the proper height will help control weeds.
- Do not fertilize tall fescue and bluegrass lawns using a granular product until September.
- Plant warm-season grasses such as Bermuda, centipede and St. Augustine. Wait until May to plant zoysia.
- Fertilize Bermuda and zoysia now, according to your soil test results.
- Avoid adding nitrogen to your centipede lawn.

Ornamentals

- Do not remove foliage from spring-blooming bulbs until the leaves have turned brown halfway up the blade.
 - Apply a fresh layer of mulch on plant beds. Do not put down more than 3 to 4 inches of mulch. Mulch helps to retain moisture, prevent weeds and build soil.
 - It's time to plant your summer bulbs: dahlia tubers, cannas, gladioli and caladiums.
 - Summer-blooming bulbs that are already in the garden will appreciate a side dressing of fertilizer when the first leaves appear.
 - If spring-flowering shrubs need to be pruned, do so within one month of blooms fading.
 - This is a good time to layer new plants by lowering a branch of your favorite shrubs and covering it with soil and a stone.

Edibles

- Contact your local Cooperative Extension Center to find out your average last frost date. You may plant cold-tolerant vegetables like cabbage, broccoli and greens before the last frost date.
 - Plant warm-season vegetables after all danger of frost has passed.
 - When you plant your garden, remember to rotate location of plant families to reduce disease and insect pressure.

Garden Visitors

- Hummingbirds will be arriving this month. Take a few minutes to clean feeders and have them put out and ready. *Diane Turner*

Foamflower Robert E. Lyons ©

The third annual **Cabarrus County Master Gardener Herb & Plant Festival** will be April 19 at the Piedmont Farmers Market, 518 Winecoff School Road NW, in Kannapolis. The festival runs from 8 a.m. until 5 p.m. Sixty vendors will sell herbs, plants and gardening related items. Dr. Jeanine M. Davis, with the Department of Horticultural Science at N.C. State University, will be the keynote speaker. Other speakers include Debbie Clark Moore, published author and Extension Master Gardener; Cheryl Laudenschlager, certified holistic nurse and aroma therapist; Madge Eggena, Mills Garden Herb Farm; Mimi Middleton, Director of Mountain Spirit School of Herbalism at the North Carolina School of Natural Healing; and Kathy Schlosser, chair of the National Herb Garden at the U.S. National Arboretum in Washington, D.C. Admission and parking are free. Open air market includes restrooms and some overhead shelter.

Visit <http://cabarrus.ces.ncsu.edu/> or call (704) 920-3310.

David Goforth

TOP AWARDS RECEIVED FROM:

- ▶ North Carolina State Grange/Extension Foundation
- ▶ Garden Writers Association
- ▶ International Association of Business Communicators
- ▶ N.C. & National Associations of County Agricultural Agents
- ▶ Southern Extension Forest Resource Specialists
- ▶ Mecklenburg County Priority Awards

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