



Photo 1

Photo 2

Photo 3

Photo 4

Photo 5

Photo 6

Ahh – To Grow A Garden – So Get Up and Get Growing –Taylorsville City - Tree Of The Month Article – May 2009 - The Beauty of Redbud Trees - For reference Taylorsville City is United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Hardiness zone 7A. American Redbud or Eastern Redbud is sometimes referred to as the Judas tree as it dates back to biblical times. There is a longstanding myth that Judas Iscariot hanged himself from a tree of this species. The species is native to Western Asia (including Iran, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria), Southern Europe (including Albania, Bulgaria, France, Greece, Italy, Turkey, Yugoslavia), and North America. Eastern Redbud is native to eastern North America from southern Ontario, Canada south to northern Florida, and extends as far west as the Northern Great Plains and into Texas, Oklahoma and Kansas (**Photos 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 9, 10 and 12**)(**Photo #12 is the White Eastern Redbud**).

The Eastern Redbud tree is a relatively small tree with spreading branches with either a small short trunk or a multi-stemmed trunk. The Eastern Redbud is a popular ornamental tree which can be found in many gardens and streetscapes in the United States (US). It is one of the earliest flowering trees and is often used to add color to spring gardens. The purple pink flowers of the Eastern Redbud appear all over the tree in early spring, and are even produced on large trunks. Eastern Redbuds also come in a cultivar that has a white flower (**Photo 12**). Redbuds are an attractive tree that is a member of the legume (pea family) and has the same flowering time as Dogwoods. The Redbuds put on a spectacular spring display. Eastern Redbuds like Dogwoods are an understory tree in the Eastern hardwood forests, and are adapted to live under the canopy of the larger trees.

They are usually less than twenty (20) feet tall, although they can grow up to fifty (50) feet tall when growing in the open, with a twenty-five (25) to thirty-five (35) foot spread. The flowers of Redbud have a typical pea-blossom form with rosy pink flowers that appear in April. The Redbud flowers are edible, with a slightly nutty flavor. The flowers can be added to pancakes or fritters or used as an attractive garnish on salads. Or you can use them to make a unique pickle relish! If you want to sample Redbud flowers, remember, as with the gathering of any wild edible, don't take all that you find. Leave plenty for the tree to produce seed pods, for the insects to get nectar and pollen, and to enjoy the beauty of the blooms.

In spring the young leaves are reddish-purple. In summer the leaves change to dark green, with a smooth, and glossy surface then to turn yellow in the fall. The leaves of the Redbud are distinctive with a large heart-shaped pattern, growing in an alternating pattern on the twigs. When green and tender the leaves as well as the seed pods are also edible. The seed pods can be cooked and served with butter just like peas. As they mature, the pods become brown and papery, and may persist on the branches until the following spring. Considering the abundance of seeds produced, it is interesting that only a few birds make the Redbud pods a regular part of their diet. The bark of the Redbud is gray and smooth in young trees. It becomes reddish-brown with flattened scaly plates in older specimens; later ridged and furrowed to scaly and dark gray; and may have some maroon patches evident and orange in the cracks, and can have a twisted trunk with spreading branches.

There are three (3) subspecies of Redbuds in North America. Eastern Redbuds are found along the Eastern US and Canada as discussed above. Eastern Redbud requires very little maintenance except for an occasional watering during hot dry periods and are hardy in USDA zones 4 to 9. As the tree matures, you can trim off the bottom branches to suit your mowing needs. The Texas/Oklahoma Redbuds grow taller than the Eastern Redbuds and will attain a thirty (30) to forty (40) foot height, but has narrower width at fifteen (15) to twenty (20) feet, and the flowers are a much deeper pink, but are less hardy only in USDA zones 6B to 9A, (**Photos 7 and 12**). Western/California Redbuds are the native to Utah, Nevada, California and Arizona, and found in five plant communities including oak woodland, chaparral, mixed conifer forest, riparian woodland, and closed cone forests at the 4,000 to 5,500 foot elevations. The Western/California Redbud is a large shrub six (6) to twenty (20) feet tall and approximately ten (10) feet wide, and are hardy only in USDA zones 7 to 9, (**Photos 8 and 11**).



Photo 7

Photo 8

Photo 9

Photo 10

Photo 11

Photo 12