

Cercis occidentalis: Western Redbud¹

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Introduction

This small tree or shrub will usually grow several trunks from its base unless properly pruned. It is native to California, Arizona and Utah, but grows predominantly in California foothills below 4000 feet. The temperature needs to drop below 28-degrees F. in order for flowering to be profuse. The plant is not grown in the eastern U.S.

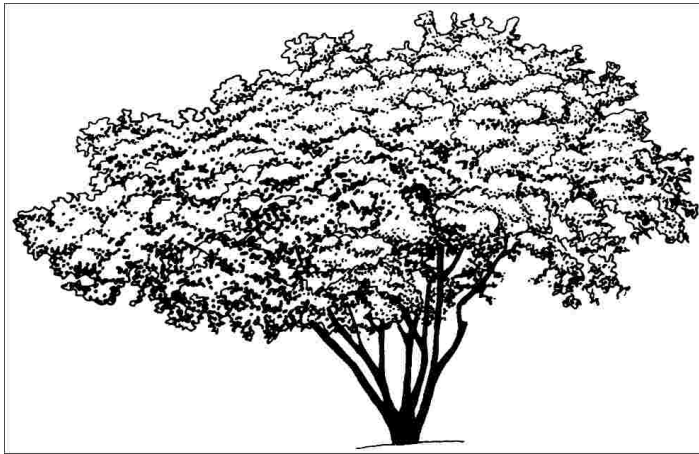


Figure 1. Mature *Cercis occidentalis*: Western Redbud

Origin: native to North America

Invasive potential: little invasive potential

Uses: sidewalk cutout (tree pit); street without sidewalk; tree lawn 3-4 feet wide; tree lawn 4-6 feet wide; tree lawn > 6 ft wide; parking lot island < 100 sq ft; parking lot island 100-200 sq ft; parking lot island > 200 sq ft; container or planter; specimen

Availability: not native to North America



Figure 2. Range

General Information

Scientific name: *Cercis occidentalis*

Pronunciation: SER-sis ock-sih-den-TAY-liss

Common name(s): Western Redbud, California Redbud

Family: Leguminosae

USDA hardiness zones: 6A through 9B (Fig. 2)

Description

Height: 15 to 25 feet

Spread: 15 to 25 feet

Crown uniformity: irregular

Crown shape: vase

1. This document is ENH311, one of a series of the Environmental Horticulture, Florida Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida. Original publication date November 1993. Revised December 2006. Reviewed May 2011. Visit the EDIS website at <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu>.

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Crown density: moderate

Growth rate: moderate

Texture: medium

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: alternate (Fig. 3)

Leaf type: simple

Leaf margin: entire

Leaf shape: cordate, ovate

Leaf venation: pinnate

Leaf type and persistence: deciduous

Leaf blade length: 2 to 4 inches

Leaf color: green

Fall color: yellow

Fall characteristic: not showy

Flower

Flower color: lavender, pink

Flower characteristics: very showy

Fruit

Fruit shape: elongated

Fruit length: 1 to 3 inches

Fruit covering: dry or hard

Fruit color: brown

Fruit characteristics: attracts birds; showy; fruit/leaves not a litter problem

Trunk and Branches

Trunk/bark/branches: branches droop; not showy; typically multi-trunked; thorns

Pruning requirement: needed for strong structure

Breakage: resistant

Current year twig color: brown

Current year twig thickness: medium

Wood specific gravity: unknown

Culture

Light requirement: full sun, partial sun or partial shade

Soil tolerances: clay; sand; loam; acidic; alkaline; well-drained

Drought tolerance: moderate

Aerosol salt tolerance: low

Other

Roots: not a problem

Winter interest: no

Outstanding tree: no

Ozone sensitivity: unknown

Verticillium wilt susceptibility: unknown

Pest resistance: resistant to pests/diseases

Use and Management

Cercis are best propagated by seed. Use ripe seed to plant directly, or, if seed has been stored, stratification is necessary before sowing in a greenhouse. Cultivars can be propagated by grafting onto seedlings, or by summer cuttings under mist or in a greenhouse.

Pests and Diseases

Probably similar to the pests affecting other Redbuds.