



Redbud: A Beautiful Sign of Spring

So let me get this straight: is it April showers bring May flowers or March showers bring April flowers? Last month was the wettest March on record for this area. We ended the month with 16.2 inches of rain. It rained 17 out of 31 days last month. Here's hoping we have that much rain throughout the coming summer!

Last month I escaped the rainfall and traveled to Knoxville for an Extension Master Gardener State Conference. It was a lovely drive with the different colors of spring on display. As I started heading east on I-40, I couldn't help but notice the many Redbud trees that peppered the landscape from the western part of the state to the east. They were pretty!

Redbud trees flower early in the spring before many of the other trees start to leaf out. Many of the Redbuds I saw seemed to be understory trees that were mixed in with bigger leafless hardwoods. They are adaptable species that can grow in many different soil and climatic conditions.

Redbud flowers are absolutely beautiful in the spring. They have a color range from light, clear pink to purplish pink. I understand that there are white-flowered selections as well available in some nurseries. The flowers are grouped in clusters that are held tightly against the stems and branches. This creates a colorful outline of the branching structure of the tree.

Redbud is a member of the legume family and the tree produces flat, brown seedpods. It is considered to be a relatively small tree capable of reaching 15 to 30 feet tall under optimal conditions. The tree flowers for three to five weeks in March or April before the leaves appear. The leaves of the tree are heart-shaped.

Growing conditions would be light shade to full sun. 'Forest Pansy' is a great choice because of its burgundy foliage on new growth. Redbud can add an elegant touch of spring color to your landscape. I actually planted a Redbud in my landscape last year for Arbor Day. I can't wait to see those beautiful flowers for many springs to come in my backyard! Until next time, happy gardening!



Christopher Caputo