2021

DELAWARE
NURSERY & LANDSCAPE ASSOCIATION
Plant of the Year

This year marks Delaware Nursery & Landscape Association's Twenty-Seventh Annual Plant of the Year selection. The 2021 Herbaceous plant is *Hakonechloa macra*. The 2021 Woody plant is *Cercis canadensis*. These plants were chosen because they are particularly well suited to thrive in Delaware.

Cercis canadensis　Eastern Redbud

Eastern redbud is a native tree with bright rose purple flowers that open in early spring. Pea-like flowers are born on bare branches before leaves emerge, cloaking the branches in bright purple. Leaves are heart-shaped with a pale-yellow fall color. This understory tree can be multi-trunked with a rounded crown that is 20-30 feet at maturity. It is great as a small specimen tree or can be naturalized at the woods edge in clusters. The genus name comes from the Greek word *kerkis* meaning weaver's shuttle since the seed pod (dry and bean-like hanging 2-4" long) resembles the shuttle. Popular cultivars include 'Forest Pansy' known for its red-purple leaves at emergence that maintain their color until early- to mid-summer, when they turn green and 'Alba' with white flowers.

Photo courtesy of Rick Darke

Hakonechloa macra　Hakone Grass

Photo courtesy of Rick Darke

Hakone grass is a spreading, shade loving perennial grass native to central Japan. Gracefully arching, linear bright-green leaves form dense cascading mounds 12-18" wide and 24" tall. The papery texture of the leaves resembles some species of bamboo. Hakone grass is a great shade groundcover or accent plant in shaded areas of mixed borders. It works well along paths and walkways and sprawls attractively over rocks. Its deer resistance makes it extremely useful in gardens.

Cultivars vary from green to yellow and can be boldly variegated in stripes of white, green or yellow. Some cultivars turn orange or red in fall and are usually shorter than the species. The chartreuse color of many Hakone grasses pops in the shady border and combines well with the purples of phlox or the blues of salvia.

Photo courtesy of Rick Darke

UNIQUE PLANTS FOR DELAWARE LANDSCAPES