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Werner et al.

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(54) **CERCIS PLANT NAMED ‘NC2017-8’**

(50) Latin Name: *Cercis canadensis*
Varietal Denomination: **NC2017-8**

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CPC **A01H 6/00** (2018.05)

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(56) **References Cited**

U.S. PATENT DOCUMENTS

PP17,161 P3 10/2006 Woody
PP22,097 P3 8/2011 Werner
PP22,297 P3 * 12/2011 Werner A01H 6/54
Plt./216

* cited by examiner

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(57) **ABSTRACT**

A new and distinct variety of *Cercis* plant, referred to by its
cultivar name ‘NC2017-8’, is disclosed. The new cultivar
originated in a controlled breeding program. Plants of the
new variety provide purple-colored flowers and exhibit
small and purple colored foliage. The new variety displays
a moderately slow growing, profuse branching, weeping and
compact growth habit.

2 Drawing Sheets

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Latin name of genus and species of plant claimed: *Cercis*
canadensis.

Variety denomination: ‘NC2017-8’.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

The present invention relates to a new and distinct cultivar
of *Cercis* plant botanically known as *Cercis canadensis* and
hereinafter referred to by the cultivar name ‘NC2017-8’.

The new cultivar originated in a controlled breeding
program in Jackson Springs, N.C. in 2011.

The new *Cercis* cultivar is the result of a controlled cross
wherein two parents were crossed which previously had
been studied in the hope that they would contribute the
desired characteristics. The female parent (i.e., the seed
parent) of the new cultivar is *Cercis* ‘Ruby Falls’, U.S. Plant
Pat. No. 22,097. The male parent (i.e., the pollen parent) of
the new cultivar is *Cercis* ‘Ace of Hearts’, U.S. Plant Pat.
No. 17,161.

The parentage of the new variety can be summarized as
follows:

‘Ruby Falls’ x ‘Ace of Hearts’

The seeds resulting from the above pollination were sown
and small plants were obtained which were physically and
biologically different from each other. Selective study in
2017 in a controlled environment in Jackson Springs, N.C.

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resulted in the identification of a single plant of the new
variety, which was selected for its purple-colored flowers,
small purple-colored foliage, and moderately slow growing,
profuse branching, weeping and compact growth habit.

Asexual reproduction of the new cultivar by chip budding
since 2017 in Belvidere, Tenn. has demonstrated that the
new cultivar reproduces true to type with all of the charac-
teristics, as herein described, firmly fixed and retained
through successive generations of such asexual propagation.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The following characteristics of the new cultivar have
been repeatedly observed and can be used to distinguish
‘NC2017-8’ as a new and distinct cultivar of *Cercis* plant:

- (a) Purple-colored flowers,
- (b) Small, purple-colored foliage; and
- (c) Moderately slow growing, profuse branching, weep-
ing and compact growth habit.

The new variety of the present invention can readily be
distinguished from its ancestors. More specifically, plants of
the new cultivar differ from plants of ‘Ruby Falls’ (i.e., the
seed parent) primarily in having a more open to spreading
weeping habit and smaller leaf size. In addition, plants of
‘Ace of Hearts’ (i.e., the pollen parent) exhibit green colored
foliage and display a compact, dense and dome-shaped

growth habit, whereas plants of the new variety exhibit purple colored foliage and display a weeping growth habit.

Moreover, the new variety can be readily distinguished from other similar non-parental varieties. Of the many commercially available *Cercis* cultivars, the most similar in comparison to the new cultivar is 'Merlot', U.S. Plant Pat. No. 22,297. However, plants of the new cultivar differ from plants of 'Merlot' in at least the following characteristics:

1. Plants of the new cultivar have a more compact growth habit than plants of 'Merlot'.
2. Plants of the new cultivar have more textured leaves than plants of 'Merlot'.
3. Plants of the new cultivar have a weeping growth habit which differs from the non-weeping growth habit of 'Merlot'.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE PHOTOGRAPH

The accompanying photograph shows, as nearly true as it is reasonably possible to make the same in color illustrations of this type the typical growth habit of the new cultivar. Colors in the photograph differ slightly from the color values cited in the detailed description, which accurately describes the colors of 'NC2017-8'. The plant in the photograph was approximately four years old and was growing in a test field in Cochranville, Pa.

FIG. 1—illustrates a side view of 'NC2017-8'.

FIG. 2—illustrates a side view of a flower of 'NC2017-8'.

DETAILED BOTANICAL DESCRIPTION

The new cultivar has not been observed under all possible environmental conditions to date. Accordingly, it is possible that the phenotype may vary somewhat with variations in the environment, such as temperature, light intensity, and day length, without, however, any variance in genotype.

The chart used in the identification of colors described herein is The R.H.S. Colour Chart of The Royal Horticultural Society, London, England, 2007 edition, except where general color terms of ordinary significance are used.

The following descriptions and measurements describe plants produced from chip budding and grown outside in Raleigh, N.C. Plants were approximately three years of age, unless noted otherwise. Measurements and numerical values represent averages of typical plants.

Botanical classification: *Cercis canadensis* cultivar NC2017-8.

Parentage:

Female parent.—*Cercis* 'Ruby Falls', U.S. Plant Pat. No. 22,097.

Male parent.—*Cercis* 'Ace of Hearts', U.S. Plant Pat. No. 17,161.

Propagation:

Type.—Chip budding.

Plant description:

Type.—Deciduous perennial tree.

Growth habit and general appearance.—Moderately slow growing, weeping, compact tree.

Commercial crop time.—Approximately 1.5 years from budding to finish as a 2 to 3-foot tree.

Hardiness.—USDA Zone 6b.

Size.—Height of 3-year-old tree: Approximately 4 feet. Width: Approximately 4.9 feet.

Trunk.—Texture: slightly rough. Color: 201B. Diameter: 6.0 cm at 60.0 cm off the ground.

Bark.—Scaly tree bark color: 201B. Inner bark color: 199A. Shape: Wavy.

Branches.—Densely branched. Branching habit: multi-branched, weeping architecture. Strength: Moderately strong. Diameter of one-year old growth: Approximately 5.0 mm. Stem Length of one-year old shoots: 22.5 cm. Internode length: 1.6 cm on average. Stem Shape: Circular. Growth pattern: slightly zigzag, deviating less than 5 degrees from vertical at each node. Texture of new growth: Slightly rugose. Color of young stem: N77A. Color of mature stem: previous seasons growth is N200B. Lenticel: numerous, tiny. Lenticel length: Less than 1.0 mm. Lenticel shape: circular to slightly elongate. Lenticel color: 197C.

Foliage description:

General description.—Type: Deciduous. Arrangement: Alternate.

Leaves.—Shape of mature leaves: Cordate. Apex: Distinctly pointed. Base: Cordate. Margin: Entire. Length to base of sinus: Approximately 4.0 cm. Length to end of lobe: Approximately 4.7 cm. Sinus indentation: Approximately 0.8 cm. Width: Approximately 4.2 cm. Texture of upper and lower surfaces: Slightly rugose. Venation pattern: Reticulate. Color of upper surface of mature foliage: N77A with indistinguishable venation. Color of under surface of mature foliage: N77B with venation of 147B. Color of upper and lower surfaces of immature foliage: 59A with indistinguishable venation. Fragrance: None detected. Fall leaf color: light burgundy. Dormant lateral leaf buds of two-years old plant: Length is 2.0 mm; width is 1.0 mm; shape is ovoid; color is 187A.

Petiole.—Length: Approximately 2.5 cm. Diameter: Approximately 1.0 mm. Texture: Smooth, glabrous. Color: N77A.

Flowering description:

Flowering season.—Flowers in early spring for about 2-3 weeks depending on weather conditions.

General description.—Form: Fascicle. Flower Arrangement: Sessile clusters. Symmetry: Bilateral symmetry. Type: Papilionaceous. Quantity per cluster: 5 per cluster on average. Flower length: 7.0 mm on average. Flower width across wings at anthesis: 4.0 mm on average. Flower depth (bottom of keel petals to top of wings): 4.0 mm on average.

Bud just before opening.—Shape: slightly elongate. Diameter: Approximately 1.0 mm. Length: Approximately 1.0 mm. Color: 59B. Texture: Glabrous.

Petals.—Quantity: 5, unfused. Texture of upper and lower surfaces: Glabrous. Color of banner, wings, and keel base when first and fully open: 73A. Color of keel tip when first and fully open: 61B. Keel petals of two-years old plant: Length is 6.0 mm; width at midsection is 3.0 mm; width at base is short stalk of less than 1.0 mm. Banner petals of two-years old plant: Length is 5.6 mm; width at midsection is 3.0 mm; width at base is short stalk of less than 1.0 mm. Wing petals of two-years old plant: Length is 6.8 mm; width at midsection is 2.8 mm; width at base is short stalk of less than 1.0 mm.

Calyx.—Shape: vase-shaped. Diameter: Approximately 2.0 mm at top of hypanthium. Length:

Approximately 3.0 mm. Color of outer surface: 59B.
Texture of inner and outer surfaces: Glabrous.

Sepals.—Arrangement: Fused.

Pedicel.—Strength: Strong. Shape: Round. Length:
Approximately 3.0 mm. Diameter: Less than 1.0 5
mm. Texture: Glabrous. Color: 60B.

Reproductive organs.—Androecium: Stamen quantity
per flower: 10 on average, unfused. Stamen length:
Approximately 4.0 mm. Stamen width: Less than 1.0
mm. Anther shape: Round. Anther color: 65A. Fila- 10
ment length: Approximately 4.0 mm. Filament
width: Less than 1.0 mm. Filament color: 65A.
Pollen amount: Sparse. Pollen color: 11B. Gynoe-
cium: Pistil length: Approximately 4.0 mm on aver-
age. Pistil width: Less than 1.0 mm. Pistil texture: 15
Glabrous. Stigma shape: Round. Stigma color: 59D.

Stigma length: Less than 1.0 mm. Stigma width:
Less than 1.0 mm. Style shape: Round. Style width:
Less than 1.0 mm. Style color: 59A. Ovary position:
Superior. Ovary shape: Elongate. Ovary length: Less
than 1.0 mm. Ovary width: Less than 1.0 mm. Ovary
color: 59A.

Seed production.—None observed to date.

Disease and pest resistance.—Plants of the new *Cercis*
have not been noted to be resistant to pathogens and
pests common to *Cercis*.

We claim:

1. A new and distinct cultivar of *Cercis* plant named
'NC2017-8', substantially as herein illustrated and
described.

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FIG. 1

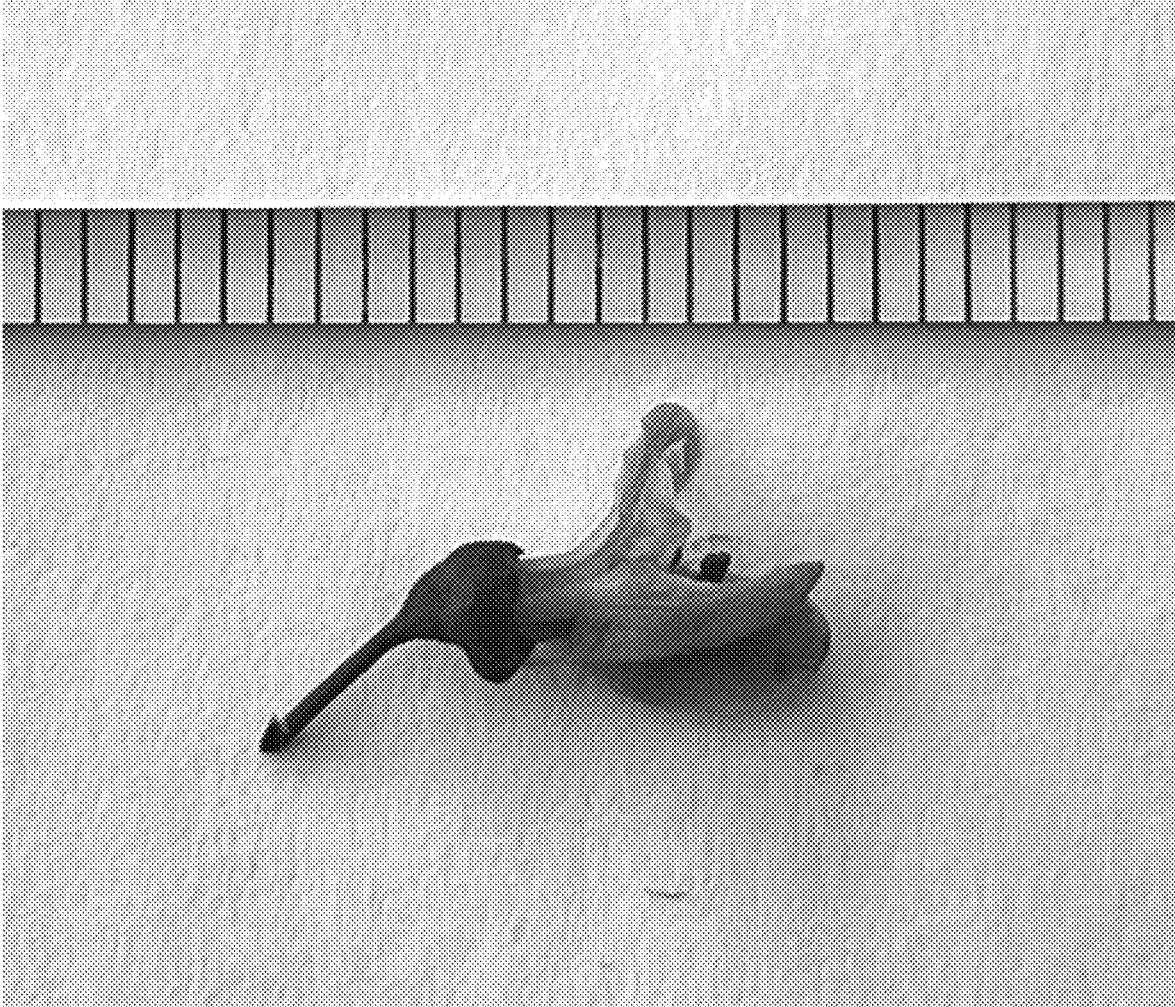


FIG. 2