



CHRISTENSEN'S PLANT CENTER

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Thinking outside the box!

As we all know there are some trees that are way overused in the landscape and some that are hardly even known. A perfect example is 'Cleveland Select' pear. One thing that catches your eye are the lovely white blossoms that appear before the leaves do and I admit they are nice - but what about the Katsura tree? It's a great sub that is so overlooked. First of all it is medium to fast grower and can even get up to 40' tall in 20 years so it is a great shade tree like the pear. Granted it doesn't have those white flowers but it does have a small pink flower early in spring. Another eye catcher are the leaves which are rounded and similar to a Redbud.

Now the latin for the Katsura is *Cercidiphyllum japonicum*, which literally means, like Cercis or Redbud for those of us who do not always like to use Latin and yes I am one of them. Finally the one true catch for a Katsura is the odor it gives off, that smells like cotton candy or some have even said it has a brown sugar smell. If you want to see a great specimen of it in a shrub form, there is one at Michigan State right outside the Plant Soil Science Building near the Children's Gardens.



Cercidiphyllum japonicum



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Also I was talking with a customer the other day who was looking for a tree for a rather salty area near a building. He said that there had been Ginkgo trees there before but they just could not take the weather and salt there so after some thought I came up with another tree that would fit in great, *Eucommia ulmoides* or Hardy Rubber Tree. This is another tree that we are starting to stock again that is a tough as nails street tree, one that is very hardy and takes salty conditions. Normally it will be about 50' tall and the same in width. Granted it doesn't have any flowers, but the leaves are a bright green that seem to glimmer in the moonlight and it is a great shade tree.

So next time you are in, ask your salesman to show these two trees to you and see if they can be substituted into your next job.