

Key Markers of Love

The leaves of a tree are more than dangling appendages and shade providers; they perform photosynthesis to provide food for the tree and oxygen for wildlife and people. Leaves are also a key marker to identification between species of trees, with shape being the most significant factor. Trees with *cordiform*, or heart-shaped, leaves are some of the most easily recognized, and several common species are found in North America.

The Redbuds - Most trees in the *Cercis* genus have heart-shaped leaves, such as eastern redbud (*Cercis canadensis*), a deciduous tree native to eastern and central North America and cultivated in U.S. Department of Agriculture plant hardiness zones 4 through 8.



Northern Catalpa - Also known as cigar tree, catawba and Indian bean tree, northern catalpa (*Catalpa speciosa*) is a North American deciduous species of tree with a natural range that includes USDA zones 4 through 8.



Current Project

We got to kick off the year by building a new walking path to an existing dock for one of our fine family of Naturescapes friends on Lake James. The combination of railroad ties and small river gravel were the materials of choice for this particular winter project. Railroad ties are heavy, they last a long time, blend in adequately in the woods, and are the perfect thickness to build steps. The objective was to construct a path that is easily traversed day or night, for young or old, and with or without a handful of the stuff used while recreating on the water. The finished product fits nicely in the woods and is ready for enjoyment. Happy Trails!!



DID YOU KNOW? February was added to the Roman calendar in 713 BC? The length of the month changed over time and, at one time, it had as few as 23 days. When Julius Caesar remade the Roman calendar, the month was assigned 28 days during normal years and 29 days during leap years which occurred every four years.

