

# Magnolia

Info

## Magnolia grandiflora

Magnolia is a pyramidal-shaped evergreen tree that produces large white flowers in spring and summer months. There are two main species which are native to the Southeastern U.S.; *Magnolia grandiflora*, (Southern Magnolia) and the *Magnolia virginiana*, (Sweet Bay Magnolia). Of the two, *Magnolia grandiflora* is more commonly used in landscaping. *Magnolia grandiflora* is a large growing pyramidal-shaped tree which may reach 60 to 80 feet in overall height with a 30 to 40 foot spread. This species has large glossy green leaves with a rusty or silvery underside and produces large white flowers in the spring. There are several *Magnolia grandiflora* cultivars available which grow much more compact in overall size. *Magnolia grandiflora* "Little Gem" is a compact variety which grows to about 25 feet in height. Leaves are glossy green and small and growth habit is narrow and upright. White flowers appear most of the year. *Magnolia grandiflora* "Saint Mary" is another compact form of Southern Magnolia. Leaves are medium size and shiny green with deep bronze coloring beneath. Growth habit is pyramidal to about 20 feet in height. White flowers are produced during summer months. There are numerous other varieties of *Magnolia grandiflora* including; **D.D.Blanchard, Miss Chloe, Claudia Wannamaker, Symmes and Alta**. All of these varieties make attractive trees and each one has characteristics that make it suited for a particular use in the landscape.

The *Magnolia virginiana* (Sweet Bay Magnolia) is the other native growing species of Magnolia which is used in landscapes. This variety may grow to 50 feet in overall height. Leaves are large and bright green in color, white flowers are produced during summer months. This species of magnolia is often found growing in wetland areas throughout the southeastern U.S.. All Magnolias are extremely cold hardy and have a moderate tolerance to salt spray. Magnolias may be used in the landscape as an evergreen shade tree in open lawn areas or along the street as an avenue planting. Dwarf cultivars may be used in courtyards or as a specimen plant in berms or planting beds.

### PLANTING

Magnolias grow their best when planted in a well-drained, rich soil with an acid pH. Sandy soil should be improved by the addition of organic matter such as Rockledge Gardens planting mix. Container grown specimens should be set in the ground at or slightly above ground level. An organic mulch 2 to 3 inches thick should be applied within a 3 to 4 foot ring around the base of the tree to help conserve moisture and protect the trunk from possible damage from lawn maintenance equipment. Mix **Espoma Bio-tone Starter** to soil for strong healthy root growth. Newly planted magnolias may require two years or more to become fully established. Quite often during this period, trees may lose much foliage and may look somewhat straggly; although once established, plants will fill in full at a moderate growth rate.

### FERTILIZING

Magnolias should be fertilized three times per year. In March, May and September use **Espoma Holly-tone Fertilizer** and apply 1 to 3 pounds for smaller trees and 5 pounds for larger, established trees. Distribute lightly over the entire root zone which extends out to and just beyond the canopy spread of the tree.

### PLANT PROBLEMS

**Dieback:** Leaves turn yellow then brown and drop. May be caused by trees not being established or from over watering. **Solution:** Remove dead branches and check moisture level in soil before watering, avoid over watering or excess moisture around roots.

**Leaf Spot:** A fungus that causes spots on the leaves, sometimes causing premature leaf drop. **Solution:** Good sanitation and foliar sprays of Copper Fungicide or Daconil will help control this fungus.

**Scale Insects:** Sucking type insects that remove plant juices through the undersides of the leaves. They can contribute to loss of foliage and dieback of tree. **Solution:** Spray with **Organicide** or **All Season Oil Spray** and apply according to the proper application rate as specified on the label.

# Rockledge Gardens



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