

## Magnolia species

*Magnolia grandiflora*, commonly known as Southern Magnolia is a large, broad-leaved evergreen tree that can grow from 18 to 27m in height with a trunk up to 0.6 - 0.9 m in diameter, although it is usually smaller. Its trunk is typically straight and erect with spreading branches that form a dense, broadly pyramidal crown. The evergreen leaves are large 13 to 20cm long, leathery and dark glossy green above with rusty, velveteen undersides. Southern Magnolia has large, showy white flowers that are 20 to 30cm in diameter. These have a pleasant fragrance and appear throughout the spring and summer. The fruits are reddish-brown cone-like structures, 5 to 10cm long, with bright red kidney shaped seeds.

Magnolia is at home in full sun to partial shade. It is drought tolerant, but does best in rich, well-drained, acidic soils. In its native territory of the US south it grows on the coastal plain from North Carolina, south to central Florida, and west to east Texas, showing it can take a variety of climates and conditions.

### Propagation

#### PRE-TREATMENT

Magnolia seed require stratification for 8 to 16 weeks. *Magnolia x soulangea* requires 90 to 180 days cold stratification as the embryo takes longer to develop. Soak seed overnight and place the seed in a plastic ziplock bag in lightly moist clean sand or peat moss and place in the refrigerator at a temperature between 0 and 5°C for 60 to 120 days. Ensure that the medium is in a lightly moist state at all times. Check for seed that may germinate during stratification and sow immediately. Once stratification has been completed, sow seed as normal.

#### SOW

Sow in a light compost of two parts peat, one part loam and one part sand. Don't let the seeds dry out. Cover with 1.5 m of compost. Cover the tray or pot to maintain moisture and protect the seed. They should germinate in about four weeks.

In colder climates, you may not be able to pot them outside. Place the seeds in a bag containing a damp, sterile medium such as peat or grit, seal and label and put in the refrigerator at about 4°C. In July, sow the seeds under glass at temperatures of 18°C+.

Magnolias are not well adapted for planting in lime soils. They like deep, well-drained loam and benefit by a little peat or compost placed about the roots at planting time. Soil should be well aerated. Transplanting is not advised because injury to large roots generally leads to ill health. They shouldn't be planted very close together either, in order to blossom, they need to be planted where they can get plenty of sunshine. The

sunny side of a Magnolia has many blossoms and the side shaded out by other trees seldom has a blossom.



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