

Magnolia grandiflora

There are two main species native to the southeastern U.S.: *Magnolia grandiflora* (Southern Magnolia) and *Magnolia virginiana* (Sweet Bay Magnolia). Of the two, *Magnolia grandiflora* is more commonly used in land-scaping. It 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 to summer.

Currently, Rockledge Gardens offers two varieties of magnolia grandiflora for sale.

“**Little Gem**” is a compact variety which grows to about 25 feet in height. Leaves are glossy green and small and the growth habit is narrow and upright. White flowers appear several times during the warm months of the year.

The distinctive magnolia **D. D. Blanchard** grows to about 40 feet. Growth habit is pyramidal (almost columnar). Leaves are large, long and shiny green with deep bronze coloring beneath. White flowers are produced during summer months.

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 specimen plants in berms or planting beds.

Planting

Magnolias grow best when planted in 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** or Canadian peat. 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. Be sure to keep mulch at least 6 inches away from the base of the tree.

Newly planted magnolias may require two years or more to become fully established. Fertilizing Magnolias may be fertilized three times during the growing season. In April, May and October 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. **Suniland 6-6-6** may be used instead according to bag instructions.

Plant Problems

Dieback: Leaves turn yellow then brown and drop. May be caused by trees not being established or from overwatering.

Solution: Remove dead branches and check moisture level in soil before watering, avoid overwatering 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 **Liquid Copper Fungicide** or **Systemic Fungicide** 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 the tree.

Solution: Spray with **All Seasons Oil** or **Bayer Advanced Garden Rose and Flower Insect Killer** and apply according to the proper application rate as specified on the label.

