

Sweet Bay Magnolia Tree

Magnolia virginiana

The Sweet Bay Magnolia is a tree native to southeastern Pennsylvania. It is a semi-evergreen tree that is multi-stemmed and only grow to 10-15 feet tall at a rate of 1 to 2 feet per year in Pennsylvania, although some may grow to 20 feet. The fragrant white flowers appearing in May and June are relatively large and showy. They do best when planted in rich moist soil and partial shade. Since Magnolias require moist acidic soil, consider placing them at the base of a hill or slope so they can collect water run-off. Avoid planting near pavement or buildings. Please keep in mind that magnolia seedlings can be a favorite of browsing white-tailed deer and will require a chicken-wire cage for the first several years. See "Follow-Up Care" in paragraph below.

Sweet Bay Magnolia trees require partial shade and grow best in wetlands with moist, rich soil. Don't forget to water the tree well after planting. When mulching around the tree, do not pile mulch right against the trunk. Allow at least 2 inches of bare ground space to prevent decay and only use native plant bark mulch in its natural colors (no dyes added). Dyed wood mulch does not break down to enrich the soil. Instead, it leaches the dye and its contaminants into the soil, harming or even killing beneficial soil bacteria, insects, earthworms, and sometimes the tree itself.

Magnolia trees cannot be planted near black walnut trees if you happen to have one on your property. They cannot tolerate the allelopathic nature of the black walnut tree as the walnut tree's juglone toxin production attempts to stunt the growth of other trees nearby.

Regarding fertilization of newly planted trees – **DON'T!** For at least the first year, their nutrient needs will be minimal. During the first year, **they are establishing their root systems**, and fertilizer (which stimulates stems and leaves) will not be appropriate. In fact, fertilizer is never really required for these plants unless they are suffering from some disease.

Provide follow-up care. Magnolia trees, during the first year after planting, require moist to wet soil that should be watered at least once a week. It can be watered less often during periods of rain but more often during hot, windy weather. Continue watering until late November as lower temperatures require less-frequent watering. It doesn't have to be watered at all if it is planted in wetlands that are always moist or wet. Additional controls such as fencing or repellents are recommended for areas with high deer populations. For example, when planting new trees or shrubs you may want to protect them temporarily with small cages taller than the plant to prevent the deer from "tasting" them before they have had a chance to grow. Another way to deter the deer in lieu of cages is deer repellent. Here are two different products that have been proven to be fairly successful:

1. Plantskydd Repellent – a pre-mixed liquid that contains environmentally safe ingredients, and long-term protection when sprayed directly on plants.
2. Deer Stopper – a highly effective but more expensive product that needs to be spray-applied every 30 days. Works by smell and taste, will not wash off, and is pleasant to use, odor free.

Botanical Name	Magnolia virginiana
Plant Type	Semi-evergreen Tree
Mature Size	15-20 feet tall, 10-15 feet wide
Sun Exposure	Partial shade
Soil Type	Rich, moist soils; sandy, sandy to medium loam, clay loam, clay
Soil Moisture	Moist to wet

