



Magnolia Facts

Number 043

March 23, 2017



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Magnolias Usually Bloom in April or May in our Climate

Saucer magnolia, (*Magnolia x soulangeana*) is the most common magnolia grown in our climate zoned 5a. This deciduous bush has spectacular large cup-shaped fragrant pink flowers in early spring. Its height reaches 20-25 feet with a similar width. In Peterborough, the large pointed buds usually bloom for Mother's Day.

The 'star' magnolia (*Magnolia stellata*) originated in Japan. This magnolia has an equally long life span, 15–20 feet at maturity. Fragrant flowers with petals more daisy-like than the wider saucer blooms, appear usually in April - May in our climate. Following flowering, attractive cone-like fruit develop. A magnolia is a welcome addition to most sized lots.

They are long-lived starting out as a bush with bare silvery-brown branches growing into a graceful arch. Species of magnolias include *Magnolia stellata* 'Royal Star' (white bloom), and 'Pink Star'. The saucer type include a yellow flower 'Elizabeth'. There is also one called 'Dr. Merrill' (*M x loebneri*) with white blooms and a good fragrance. A series of hybrid magnolias called "Little Girl Series" were developed by the U.S. Arboretum in the mid-1950's. They include 'Ann', 'Betty', 'Jane', 'Judy', 'Randy', 'Ricki', 'Susan' and 'Pinkie'. These are hardy to our climate in the right location.

These were designed to bloom 2–4 weeks later than the magnolias featured above. They range in colours of pink to purple and stand up well to summer heat and drought. Finding a particular one could be a challenge as our local nurseries don't seem to carry a large variety.

Preferred Conditions

Planting should be in a mostly sunny exposure to encourage blooms. The varieties listed here are tolerant of our cold winters however a late frost may damage the buds before they bloom. A location protected from strong winds especially from the west would be advised. Don't plant too close to a wall as it may encourage premature blooming that could cause the buds to freeze. In early spring or late fall dig a generous hole 3x larger than the root ball as the roots tend to grow close to the surface. They prefer a slightly acidic organic soil so amend the soil with compost or well-rotted manure. Mulch and water well. Keep watered over the summer the first year especially as magnolias don't like drought conditions and you may lose your tree. Give careful consideration to the full grown size of the tree when planting as they don't like to be disturbed.

Care and Pruning

Pruning is not usually necessary. If you have any dead, diseased or damaged branches remove after flowering. Also remove any cross branches rubbing together. Do not remove spent flowers as next year's blooms form from the current season's buds. Adding compost and a new layer of mulch each season should help to add nutrients to the soil. If you prefer to fertilize, a 10-10-10 fertilizer can be applied shortly after blooms fade and again in late June. Good companion plants for the magnolia are spring bulbs, bleeding heart (*Dicentra spectabilis*), and primula.

Dwarf conifers provide four season companions.

Problems you Might Encounter

In our climate, magnolias fail to bloom after some harsh winters when the flower buds are killed.

Learn more about saucer magnolia [here](#)>

Learn more about star magnolia [here](#)>