

Environmental Landscapes

Choosing the Right Tree for the Right Place

Sweetbay Magnolia

Latin name: <i>Magnolia virginiana</i>	Texture: Medium
Common name: Sweetbay magnolia	Growth rate: Moderate
Zones: 5-9	Light: Sun to partial shade
Height & Width: 40-50' h x 15-25' w	Moisture: Tolerates wet and dry
Type: Evergreen to semi-evergreen to deciduous	Soil: Acid
Habit: Narrow crown, loose, open, upright, often multi-stemmed	Origin: Native, introduced 1688 (Dirr, 2009)

Features: Showy, white, fragrant blooms appear in May-June followed by green fruit with striking red seeds that ripen in August. Leaves are 3-5" long, light or dark green above and silver below—quite striking when the wind blows. Bark is smooth, roots are shallow, and the fruit attracts birds and serves as larval food for swallowtail butterflies. Mature trees may form a pyramidal shape over time.

Siting: This versatile tree tolerates wetlands and is sometimes called swamp magnolia. It also withstands periods of drought once established. It thrives in sun to partial shade. Red fruit attracts wildlife but litter is not significant so placement near houses, sidewalks, and streets is acceptable. Bark is thin so tree needs protection from mechanical damage. Suitable for spaces with 100-200 sf of total plant-

ing space or in a planting strip at least 4-7' wide.

Care: Requires acid soil. Plant so root flare is visible in loose soil. At planting, water the root ball daily with two gallons of water per inch of trunk diameter for two weeks, every other day for two months and then weekly until established. Modify water recommendations to reflect site drainage and rainfall. Apply 3" of mulch over the planted area. Do not allow mulch to touch the trunk. Needs little or no pruning to develop strong structure.

Pests: Plants are relatively pest resistant if cultural preferences are met. If cultural requirements are not met plants may become stressed and occasional scale, leaf miner, and ambrosia beetle infestations may occur. Chlorosis may occur on high pH soils.



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*Soil pH is determined using a professional soil test. Contact your Clemson University County Extension service for assistance www.clemson.edu/extension/. Click on "local offices".

Tree selected from the Urban Tree Species Guide: Choosing the Right Tree for the Right Place.

Sources: Dirr, M. (2009). *Manual of Woody Landscape Plants*. Champaign, IL: Stipes Publishing

Gilman, E. F. (1997). *Trees for Urban and Suburban Landscapes*. Albany, NY: Delmar

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