

# *Magnolia kobus* var *stellata* ‘Green Star’ ‘Green Star’ Star Magnolia<sup>1</sup>

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## Introduction

Star magnolia is one of the hardiest of the magnolias (Fig. 1). It is a small tree or large shrub, 15 feet tall with a 10- to 15-foot spread. Typically branching close to the ground, the multi-stemmed form develops with a dense head of foliage. Star magnolia makes a wonderful patio, lawn specimen, or accent tree. Lower foliage can be removed to show off the trunk and to create more of a tree form. Otherwise, the persistent lower branches and oval to round form lend a “large bush” look to the plant. When planted against a dark background, the branching pattern and light gray trunk will show off nicely, particularly when lit up at night. The leafless winter silhouette looks great shadowed on a wall by a spotlight at night. The white flowers have a slight touch of pink coloration, and are produced in spring before the leaves appear, even on young plants. Flowers are usually not as sensitive to cold as saucer magnolia, but they can still be injured if cold weather arrives during flowering.

## General Information

**Scientific name:** *Magnolia kobus* var. *stellata* ‘Green Star’

**Pronunciation:** mag-NO-lee-uh KOE-bus variety  
stell-AY-tuh

**Common name(s):** ‘Green Star’ star magnolia

**Family:** *Magnoliaceae*

**Plant type:** shrub

**USDA hardiness zones:** 5 through 8 (Fig. 2)

**Planting month for zone 8:** year round

**Origin:** not native to North America

**Uses:** near a deck or patio

**Availability:** somewhat available, may have to go out of the region to find the plant

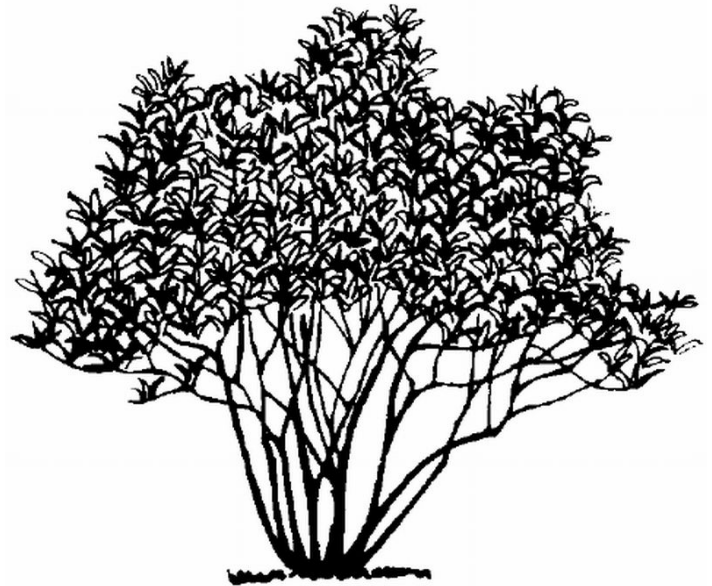


Figure 1. ‘Green Star’ star magnolia

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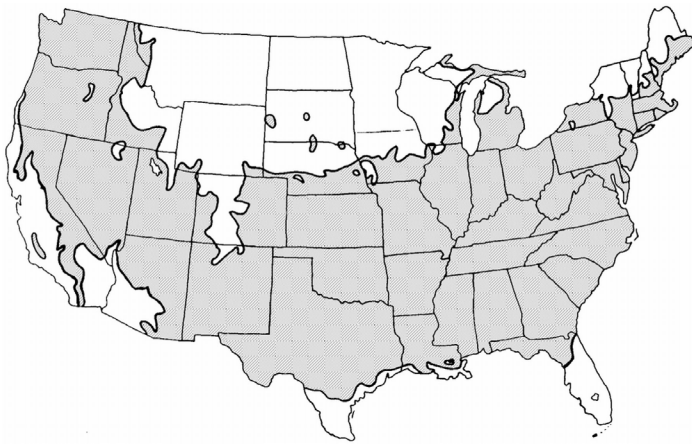


Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

## Description

**Height:** 12 to 20 feet  
**Spread:** 12 to 18 feet  
**Plant habit:** round  
**Plant density:** moderate  
**Growth rate:** slow  
**Texture:** medium

## Foliage

**Leaf arrangement:** alternate  
**Leaf type:** simple  
**Leaf margin:** entire  
**Leaf shape:** obovate  
**Leaf venation:** pinnate  
**Leaf type and persistence:** deciduous  
**Leaf blade length:** 2 to 4 inches  
**Leaf color:** green  
**Fall color:** yellow  
**Fall characteristic:** not showy

## Flower

**Flower color:** white; pink  
**Flower characteristic:** spring flowering



Figure 3. Flower of 'Green Star' star magnolia

## Fruit

**Fruit shape:** irregular  
**Fruit length:** 1 to 3 inches

**Fruit cover:** dry or hard  
**Fruit color:** brown  
**Fruit characteristic:** inconspicuous and not showy

## Trunk and Branches

**Trunk/bark/branches:** not particularly showy; typically multi-trunked or clumping stems  
**Current year stem/twig color:** brown  
**Current year stem/twig thickness:** medium

## Culture

**Light requirement:** plant grows in part shade/part sun  
**Soil tolerances:** clay; sand; loam; acidic; slightly alkaline;  
**Drought tolerance:** moderate  
**Soil salt tolerances:** poor  
**Plant spacing:** 36 to 60 inches

## Other

**Roots:** usually not a problem  
**Winter interest:** plant has winter interest due to unusual form, nice persistent fruits, showy winter trunk, or winter flowers  
**Outstanding plant:** not particularly outstanding  
**Invasive potential:** not known to be invasive  
**Pest resistance:** long-term health usually not affected by pests

## Use and Management

Star magnolia is intolerant of root competition or dryness, and plants grow slowly, perhaps one foot per year. Plant in the full sun in a rich, porous, and slightly acid soil. It is hard to transplant successfully and in the north should be moved balled and burlapped when actively growing. In USDA hardiness zones 7 and 8, transplant in late winter while the plants are still dormant, or after the growth flush in the spring or plant from containers at any time.

There are a few other cultivars: 'Jane Platt' — new, superior type with many pink petals when opening; 'Keiskei' — flowers purplish on the outside; 'Rosea' (pink star magnolia) — pale pink flowers; 'Rubra' (red star magnolia) — purplish flowers, darker than 'Rosea'; and 'Waterlily' — pink flower buds, white flowers, flowers larger with narrower petals. The "Little Girl" hybrids have an upright habit and flower later than the species, thus avoiding frost injury in most years. They include 'Ann', 'Betty', 'Jane', 'Judy', 'Randy', 'Ricki,' and 'Susan'.

Basically trouble free although scales of various types may infest twigs and leaves. Magnolia scale is the most common scale and can be one half inch across. Overwintering scales can usually be controlled with horticultural oil.

## **Pests and Diseases**

Tulip poplar weevil (sassafras weevil) feeds as a leaf miner when young and chews holes in the leaves as an adult.

None particularly troublesome. Magnolia may be subject to leaf spots, blights, scabs, and black mildews caused by a large number of fungi or bacteria. Leaf spots rarely require chemical controls. Rake up and dispose of infected leaves.

Canker diseases will kill branches. Cankers on branches can be pruned out. Keep trees healthy with regular fertilization and by watering in dry weather.

Verticillium wilt may cause death of a few branches or may kill the tree. Prune out dead branches and fertilize regularly.