

Magnolia x soulangiana ‘Lennei’: ‘Lennei’ Saucer Magnolia¹

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Introduction

Young Japanese or saucer magnolia are distinctly upright, becoming more oval, then round by 10 years of age. Blooms open in late winter in the southern part of its range to early spring in the northern part of its range before the leaves emerge. Flowers are large, shaded in deep pink on the outside of the petals and white on the inside, creating a spectacular flower display. Even young trees can develop a beautiful flower display. I consider this to be one of the best cultivars. However, a late frost can often ruin the flowers in all areas where it is grown. In warmer climates, the late-flowering selections (see the species writeup) avoid frost damage, but some are less showy than the early-flowered forms, which blossom when little else is in flower.



Figure 1. Full Form—*Magnolia x soulangiana* ‘Lennei’: ‘Lennei’ saucer magnolia.

Credits: Edward F. Gilman, UF/IFAS

1. This document is FPS-370, one of a series of the Department of Environmental Horticulture, UF/IFAS Extension. Original publication date October 1999. Revised October 2023. Visit the EDIS website at <https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu> for the currently supported version of this publication.
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Figure 2. Flower—*Magnolia x soulangiana* 'Lennei': 'Lennei' saucer magnolia.

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Figure 3. Bud—*Magnolia x soulangiana* 'Lennei': 'Lennei' saucer magnolia.

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General Information

Scientific name: *Magnolia x soulangiana* 'Lennei'

Pronunciation: mag-NO-lee-uh x soo-lan-jee-AY-nuh

Common name(s): 'Lennei' saucer magnolia

Family: *Magnoliaceae*

Plant type: tree

USDA hardiness zones: 5 through 9A (Figure 4)

Planting month for zone 7: year-round

Planting month for zone 8: year-round

Planting month for zone 9: year-round

Origin: not native to North America

Invasive potential: not known to be invasive

Uses: near a deck or patio; container or above-ground planter; espalier

Availability: generally available in many areas within its hardiness range

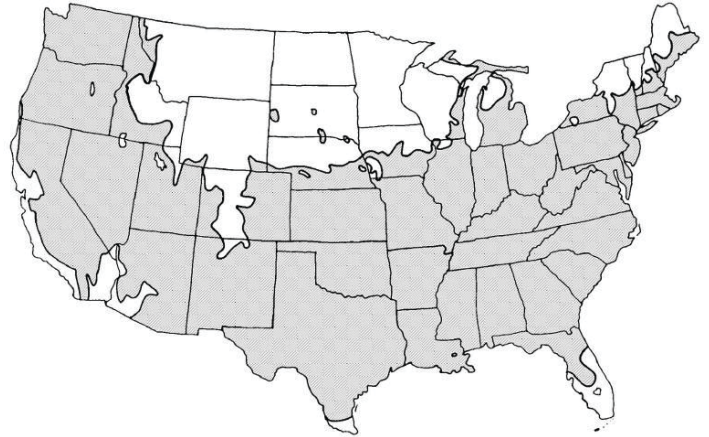


Figure 4. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

Description

Height: 20 to 25 feet

Spread: 15 to 25 feet

Plant habit: upright; round

Plant density: open

Growth rate: moderate

Texture: coarse

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: alternate

Leaf type: simple

Leaf margin: undulate

Leaf shape: obovate

Leaf venation: pinnate

Leaf type and persistence: deciduous

Leaf blade length: 4 to 8 inches

Leaf color: green

Fall color: yellow

Fall characteristic: showy

Flower

Flower color: white; pink

Flower characteristic: spring flowering; summer flowering

Fruit

Fruit shape: irregular

Fruit length: 1 to 3 inches

Fruit cover: dry or hard

Fruit color: red

Fruit characteristic: rarely fruits

Trunk and Branches

Trunk/bark/branches: no thorns; 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

Drought tolerance: moderate

Soil salt tolerances: unknown

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: plant has outstanding ornamental features and could be planted more

Pest resistance: long-term health usually not affected by pests

Use and Management

The tree is best used as a specimen in a sunny spot where it can develop a symmetrical crown. It develops an open canopy but flowers fine in a partially shaded spot. It can be pruned up if planted close to a walk or patio to allow for pedestrian clearance but probably looks its best when branches are left to droop to the ground. The light gray bark shows off nicely, particularly during the winter when the tree is bare.

Transplant in the spring, just before growth begins, and use balled and burlapped or containerized plants. Pruning wounds may not close well, so train plants early in their life to develop the desired form to avoid large pruning wounds.

Pests and Diseases

It is generally pest free, but scales of various types may infest twigs and foliage. Magnolia may be subject to leaf spots. Canker diseases will kill entire branches.