



**Sweetbay Magnolia**  
*Magnolia virginiana*

Height: 40 feet

Spread: 20 feet

Sunlight: ○ ● ●

Hardiness Zone: 5a

Other Names: Swamp Magnolia, Laurel Magnolia

**Description:**

A wonderful native tree with a relatively narrow canopy that should be planted more; large leaves with silver undersides shimmer in the wind; showy flowers over a long period; requires moist soil

**Ornamental Features**

Sweetbay Magnolia features bold fragrant creamy white cup-shaped flowers held atop the branches from early summer to early fall. It has dark green deciduous foliage. The pointy leaves turn yellow in fall. The fruits are showy red pods displayed from late summer to early fall.

**Landscape Attributes**

Sweetbay Magnolia is a multi-stemmed deciduous tree with a narrowly upright and columnar growth habit. Its average texture blends into the landscape, but can be balanced by one or two finer or coarser trees or shrubs for an effective composition.

This is a relatively low maintenance tree, and should only be pruned after flowering to avoid removing any of the current season's flowers. It is a good choice for attracting birds to your yard, but is not particularly attractive to deer who tend to leave it alone in favor of tastier treats. It has no significant negative characteristics.

Sweetbay Magnolia is recommended for the following landscape applications;

- Accent
- Shade
- Naturalizing And Woodland Gardens



*Sweetbay Magnolia flowers*  
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder



*Sweetbay Magnolia*  
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder



## Planting & Growing

Sweetbay Magnolia will grow to be about 40 feet tall at maturity, with a spread of 20 feet. It has a low canopy with a typical clearance of 3 feet from the ground, and is suitable for planting under power lines. It grows at a medium rate, and under ideal conditions can be expected to live to a ripe old age of 199 years or more; think of this as a heritage tree for future generations!

This tree performs well in both full sun and full shade. It prefers to grow in moist to wet soil, and will even tolerate some standing water. It may require supplemental watering during periods of drought or extended heat. It is not particular as to soil type, but has a definite preference for acidic soils, and is subject to chlorosis (yellowing) of the foliage in alkaline soils. It is somewhat tolerant of urban pollution. Consider applying a thick mulch around the root zone in both summer and winter to conserve soil moisture and protect it in exposed locations or colder microclimates. This species is native to parts of North America.

Lindley's Florida Native

\*\* Florida Native \*\*