

MAGNOLIA

The Magnolias we discuss here are deciduous flowering trees that offer a variety of flower colors and plant forms. Magnolias make excellent specimen trees and are easy to care for requiring very little care. They require only minor pruning if at all and perform best in full sun to light shade.

One of the most popular varieties is Butterflies Magnolia. This one has **rich yellow flower color**. Blooms appear in April before the foliage and are 3 to 4" in diameter. A vigorous grower, it can reach 20 to 30' in height and is hardy to Zone 4. A must have for any gardener!

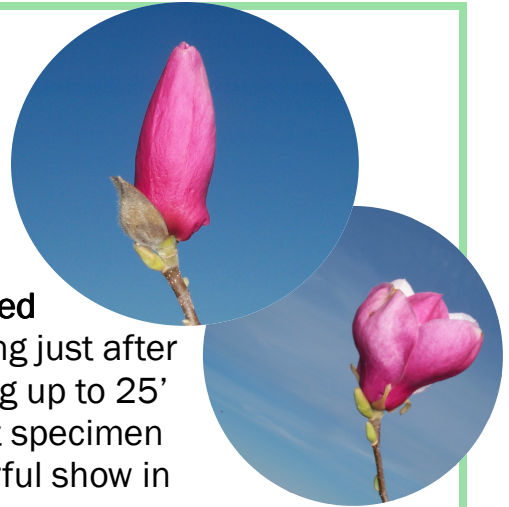


Our next Magnolias to look at are two of the hardiest selections grown. Both will succeed in Zone 4 and can be grown successfully down into Georgia. Obviously very adaptable, they are both vigorous growers and can reach 30' in height. Dr Merrill is a white flowered form similar in flower to Star Magnolia but growing twice the size. The **pure white flowers** in early spring will tolerate low temperatures without damage better than most other early blooming types. This **fragrant** selection was introduced by the Arnold Arboretum in Boston and named in 1952 after a former director of the Arboretum. Leonard Messel and other hybrid selections flower heavily but with **fragrant pink flowers** that have been described as "flamingo pink". While not as well known as other selections, Dr Merrill and Leonard Messel are two of the best Magnolias available today for your home garden and landscape.



MAGNOLIA - cont'd

Rustica Rubra Saucer Magnolia is a rather cumbersome name for one of the best Saucer Magnolias out there. Rustica Rubra was selected for its excellent **deep pink to red flower color** and is hardy to Zone 5. Blooming just after Dr. Merrill and Leonard Messel and reaching up to 25' in height and width, this tree makes a great specimen and always gets a lot of attention, a wonderful show in bloom.



Galaxy is a **deep pink to red flowering** Magnolia similar to Rustica Rubra. The plant habit is much different here, reaching 40' in height and only 20' in width. Also hardy to Zone 5. This selection was introduced by the National Arboretum back in 1980.



Our last Magnolia to review is by far the most popular. Royal Star is a selection of Star Magnolia known for its **incredible masses of white flowers** early each spring and its **wonderful fragrance**. This one is the best choice for smaller areas, reaching only 15' in height.

So, if you wanted to have Magnolias in bloom as long as possible, here they are in the order of flowering: Royal Star (white), Dr Merrill (white), Leonard Messel (pink), Rustica Rubra (deep pink), Butterflies (yellow), Galaxy (deep pink). Plant one or several and enjoy them each year as they help announce the coming of spring.

- Jeff Thompson
Pennsylvania Pride Grow Team