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Saucer Magnolia: *soulangiana* (spp.)

Leaf Color Green
Fall Color Yellow

Leaf Identification

Type: Simple
Arrangement: Alternate
Venations: Brachidodrome and pinnate
Margins: Entire and undulate
Shapes: Oblong and obovate
Length: 2in./5cm to 8in./20cm

Fruit Color Red

Magnolia x soulangiana

Saucer Magnolia, Chinese Magnolia

Magnoliaceae (Magnolia)

Nomenclature: Royal Hort. Society

Type Tree, woody plant

Hardy range 5A to 9A
Height 15' to 25' / 4.60m to 7.60m
Spread 15' to 25' / 4.60m to 7.60m
Growth rate Slow
Form Rounded and upright or erect
Exposure Partial shade or partial sun to full sun
Persistence Deciduous

Bloom Color Pink and white
Bloom Time Spring and Winter

The flowers are very showy.

Native Habitat

Hybrid origin

Crown, Branch and Twig

This plant is asymmetrical with a coarse texture and has an open crown.
This plant's bark is thin.
Branches or twigs are of medium thickness.
This plant is often grown with multiple trunks.

Branches droop.
This plant has low flammability.

Culture Notes

Saucer Magnolia grows best in a sunny location in rich, moist but porous soil. It will tolerate poor drainage for only a short period of time. Growth will be thin and leggy in a shaded spot but acceptable in part shade. Saucer Magnolia dislikes dry or alkaline soil but will otherwise grow very well in the city. Transplant from a field nursery in the spring, just before growth begins, and use balled and burlapped or containerized plants. Older plants do not like to be pruned and large wounds may not close well. Train plants early in their life to develop the desired form. Since flowers emerge very early, they are often damaged by frost.

Environment

This plant tolerates some drought.
This plant will grow in dry soil.
Suitable soil is well-drained/loamy, sandy or clay.
The pH preference is an acidic to slightly alkaline (less than 6.8 to 7.7) soil.

Landscape Uses

- Espalier
- Specimen

Attributes and Features

- Pest tolerant
- Inconspicuous fruit



Maintain adequate mulch area

Clear all turf away from beneath the branches and mulch to the drip line to reduce competition with turf and weeds. This will allow roots to become established quickly and keep plants healthier. Train and prune the trunks and branches so they will not touch each other. Remove some secondary branches on main branches with included bark, or those that are likely to develop it, as soon as possible. This reduces the likelihood of splitting from the tree later, when the tree has grown to become an important part of the landscape. Locate the tree properly, taking into account the ultimate size, since the tree looks best if it is not pruned to control size. The tree can enhance any landscape with its delightful spring flush of flowers. It can be the centerpiece of your landscape if properly located. Flowers develop from buds formed the previous year.

Tree establishment specifications

Choose good quality trees for planting. The most common cause of young tree failure is planting too deep. In most instances, the point where the top-most root in the root ball originates from the trunk (referred to as the root flare zone or root collar) should be located just above the soil surface. You may have to dig into the root ball to find the root flare. If there is nursery soil over this area, scrape it off. Never place ANY soil over the root ball. The planting hole should be at least twice the width of the root ball, preferably wider because roots grow best in loose soil. In all but exceptional circumstances where the soil is very poor, extensive research clearly shows that there is no need to incorporate any amendments into the backfill soil. Simply use the loosened soil that came out of the planting hole. Simply planting with the topmost portion of the root ball slightly higher than the surrounding soil might still install the tree too deep - be sure to locate the root flare.

Weed suppression during establishment is essential. Apply a 3-inch thick layer of mulch to at least a six-foot diameter circle around the tree. This area should be at least two feet in diameter for each inch of tree trunk diameter and maintained during the establishment period. Apply a thinner layer of mulch directly over the root ball but keep it at least 10 inches from the trunk. This allows rainwater, irrigation and air to easily enter the root ball and keeps the trunk dry. Placing mulch against the trunk and applying too thick a layer above the root ball can kill the plant by oxygen starvation, death of bark, stem and root diseases, prevention of hardening off for winter, vole and other rodent damage to the trunk, keeping soil too wet, or repelling water.

Regular irrigation after planting encourages rapid root growth that is essential for tree establishment. Trees provided with regular irrigation through the first growing season after transplanting require about 3 months (hardiness zones 9-11), 6 months (hardiness zones 7-8), or one year or more (hardiness zones 2-6) per inch of trunk diameter to fully establish roots in the landscape soil. Trees in desert climates may take longer to establish. Trees that are under-irrigated during this establishment period (and most trees are) often require additional time to establish because roots grow more slowly. Be prepared to irrigate through the entire establishment period, especially during periods of drought.

Irrigation also helps maintain and encourage the desirable dominant leader in the tree canopy on large-maturing trees. Instead of a dominant leader, trees that are under-irrigated during the establishment period often develop undesirable, low, co-dominant stems and double leaders that can split from the tree later.

Unlike established plants, which do best with deep, infrequent irrigation, research clearly shows that recently transplanted trees and shrubs establish quickest with light, frequent irrigation. For trees planted in spring or summer, provide one (cooler hardiness zones) to three irrigations (warmer hardiness zones) each week during the first few months after planting. Daily irrigation in the warmest hardiness zones provides the quickest establishment. Following the initial few months of frequent irrigation, provide weekly irrigation until plants are fully established. With every irrigation, apply one (cool climates) to two (warm climates) gallons of water per inch trunk diameter (e.g. 2 to 4 gallons for a 2-inch tree) over the root ball only. In most landscapes that receive more than 30 inches of rain or irrigation annually, if the mulch area is maintained weed-free, irrigation does not need to be applied outside of the root ball. Never add water if the root ball is saturated.

In cooler hardiness zones, in all but the driest years, irrigation of spring- and summer-planted trees usually can be discontinued once fall color has begun. Irrigation of fall planted trees, however, should be continued until foliage has dropped from the deciduous trees in the region. In warmer climates, irrigate fall-and winter-planted trees as described for the spring- and summer-planted trees.

In drier, desert climates there is benefit to be gained from applying additional irrigation outside of the root ball area. This is best done by making a large diameter berm four to six inches high, then filling it with water so it percolates into the soil. For the first two years, irrigate twice each week through the spring, once per week in summer provided monsoons arrive, and twice each week again in fall if it remains warm. Taper off watering to once or twice each month in winter and resume twice weekly next spring. For years three to five, water twice per month in spring, summer, and fall and once or twice per month in winter. During years five through seven, water once every three weeks in warm weather and once every six weeks in winter. After this, the drought-tolerant desert trees should be able to survive on natural rainfall.



Trees with good, strong structure need no pruning at planting, except to remove broken twigs. Do not remove branches to compensate for root loss - research has shown that this can be detrimental to establishment.

<<spring transplant best>>

Pests, Diseases and Damaging Agents

Pests: Basically trouble free although scales of various types may infest twigs and leaves. Sapsuckers can cause some problems.

Diseases: Magnolia may be subject to leaf spots, blights, scabs, and black mildews caused by a large number of fungi. Canker diseases will kill branches. Verticillium wilt may cause death of a few branches or may kill the tree.

Plants resist the formosan termite (*Coptotermes formosanus*).

