



Cooperative Extension Service
Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences

***Magnolia* x 'Peter Smithers'**¹

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Introduction

Young Japanese or Saucer Magnolia are distinctly upright, becoming more oval, then round by 10 years of age (Fig. 1). 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 delicately shaded in light pink and are among the largest of the Japanese Magnolias. However, a late frost can often ruin the flowers in all areas where it is grown. In warmer climates, the late-flowering selections avoid frost damage but some are less showy than the early-flowered forms which blossom when little else is in flower.

General Information

Scientific name: *Magnolia* x 'Peter Smithers'

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

Common name(s): 'Peter Smithers' Magnolia

Family: *Magnoliaceae*

Plant type: shrub

USDA hardiness zones: 5 through 9A (Fig. 2)

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

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

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

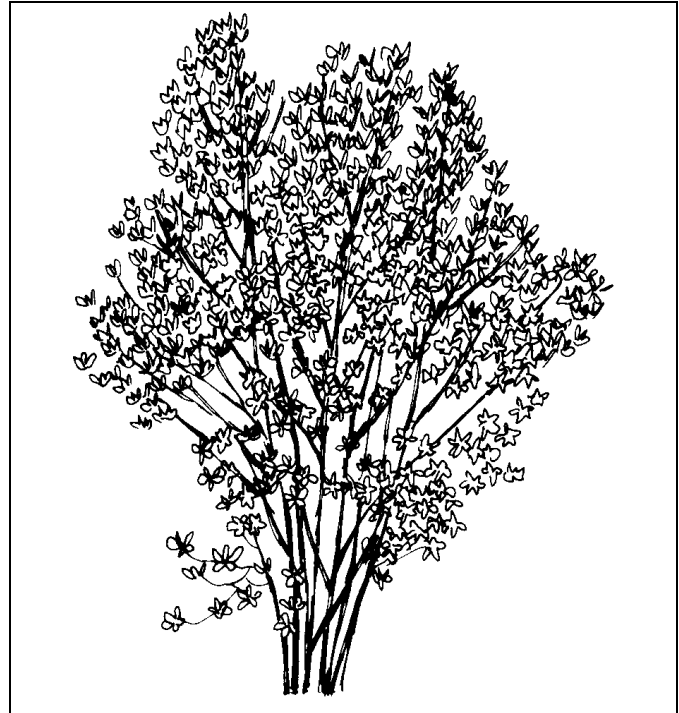


Figure 1. 'Peter Smithers' Magnolia.

Description

Height: 20 to 25 feet

Spread: 15 to 25 feet

Plant habit: upright

Plant density: open

Growth rate: moderate

Texture: coarse

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Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

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:** pink
- Flower characteristic:** spring flowering; winter 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

Invasive potential: not known to be invasive

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

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