



Cooperative Extension Service  
Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences

## ***Magnolia kobus var. stellata* ‘Royal Star’<sup>1</sup>**

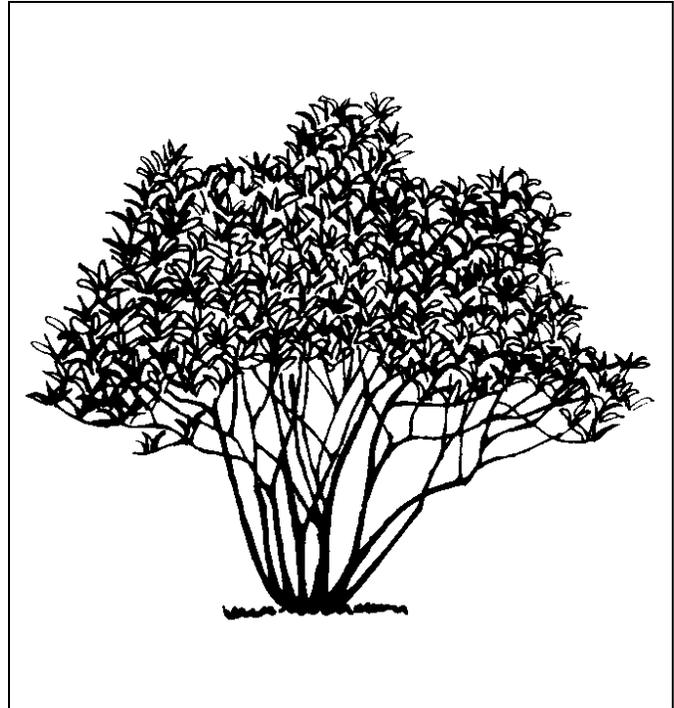
Edward F. Gilman<sup>2</sup>

### **Introduction**

Star Magnolia is one of the hardiest of the Magnolias (Fig. 1). It is a small tree or large shrub, 15-foot-tall with a 10- to 15-foot spread. Typically branching close to the ground, the multi-stemmed form develops with a dense head of foliage. Star Magnolia makes a wonderful patio, lawn specimen or accent tree. Lower foliage can be removed to show off the trunk and to create more of a tree-form. Otherwise, the persistent lower branches and oval to round form lend a “large bush”-look to the plant. When planted against a dark background, the branching pattern and light gray trunk will show off nicely, particularly when lit up at night. The leafless winter silhouette looks great shadowed on a wall by a spotlight at night. The white flowers have a slight touch of pink coloration, and are produced in spring before the leaves appear, even on young plants. Flowers are usually not as sensitive to cold as Saucer Magnolia, but they can still be injured if cold weather arrives during flowering.

### **General Information**

**Scientific name:** *Magnolia kobus var. stellata* ‘Royal Star’  
**Pronunciation:** mag-NO-lee-uh KOE-bus variety stell-AY-tuh  
**Common name(s):** ‘Royal Star’ Star Magnolia  
**Family:** *Magnoliaceae*  
**Plant type:** shrub  
**USDA hardiness zones:** 5 through 8 (Fig. 2)  
**Planting month for zone 7:** year round  
**Planting month for zone 8:** year round  
**Origin:** not native to North America  
**Uses:** near a deck or patio



**Figure 1.** ‘Royal Star’ Star Magnolia.

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

### **Description**

**Height:** 12 to 20 feet  
**Spread:** 12 to 18 feet  
**Plant habit:** round  
**Plant density:** moderate

1. This document is Fact Sheet FPS-361, one of a series of the Environmental Horticulture Department, Florida Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida. Publication date: October, 1999 Please visit the EDIS Web site at <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu>.
2. Edward F. Gilman, professor, Environmental Horticulture Department, Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida, Gainesville, 32611.

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Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

**Growth rate:** slow  
**Texture:** medium

#### Foliage

**Leaf arrangement:** alternate  
**Leaf type:** simple  
**Leaf margin:** entire  
**Leaf shape:** obovate  
**Leaf venation:** pinnate  
**Leaf type and persistence:** deciduous  
**Leaf blade length:** 2 to 4 inches  
**Leaf color:** green  
**Fall color:** yellow  
**Fall characteristic:** not showy

#### Flower

**Flower color:** white; pink  
**Flower characteristic:** spring flowering; pleasant fragrance

#### Fruit

**Fruit shape:** irregular  
**Fruit length:** 1 to 3 inches

**Fruit cover:** dry or hard  
**Fruit color:** brown  
**Fruit characteristic:** inconspicuous and not showy

#### Trunk and Branches

**Trunk/bark/branches:** not particularly showy; 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; slightly alkaline;  
**Drought tolerance:** moderate  
**Soil salt tolerances:** poor  
**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:** not particularly outstanding

**Invasive potential:** not known to be invasive

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

## Use and Management

Star Magnolia is intolerant of root competition or dryness, and plants grow slowly, perhaps one foot per year. Plant in the full sun in a rich, porous and slightly acid soil. It is hard to transplant successfully and in the north should be moved balled and burlapped when actively growing. In USDA hardiness zones 7 and 8, transplant in late winter while the plants are still dormant or plant from containers at any time.

Basically trouble free although scales of various types may infest twigs and leaves. Magnolia scale is the most common scale and can be one half-inch-across. Overwintering scales can usually be controlled with horticultural oil.

Tulip-Poplar weevil (sassafras weevil) feeds as a leaf miner when young and chews holes in the leaves as an adult.

### Pests and Diseases

None particularly troublesome. Magnolia may be subject to leaf spots, blights, scabs, and black mildews caused by a large number of fungi or bacteria. Leaf spots rarely require chemical controls. Rake up and dispose of infected leaves.

Canker diseases will kill branches. Cankers on branches can be pruned out. Keep trees healthy with regular fertilization and by watering in dry weather.

Verticillium wilt may cause death of a few branches or may kill the tree. Prune out dead branches and fertilize regularly.

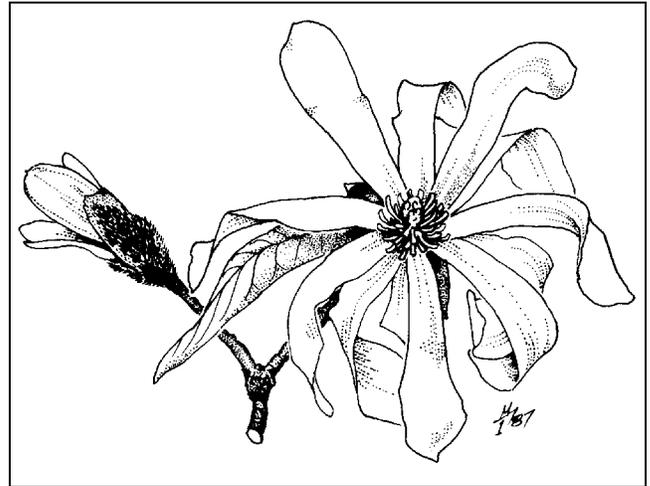


Figure 3. Flower of 'Royal Star' Star Magnolia