



# *Magnolia kobus* Kobus Magnolia<sup>1</sup>

Edward F. Gilman and Dennis G. Watson<sup>2</sup>

## INTRODUCTION

A striking tree in summer or winter (Fig. 1). Dropping its large, six-inch leaves in fall without any spectacular display of color, Kobus Magnolia forms an attractive winter specimen with its rounded silhouette and multiple trunks originating close to the ground. Supposedly grows 30 to 40 feet tall but is most often 25 feet or less in an open, sunny landscape site and is capable of reaching 75 feet in height in its native forest habitat. In an open site, spread is often greater than height with 25-foot-tall trees 35 feet wide if given the room to grow unobstructed. Branches gracefully touch the ground on older specimens as the tree spreads, in a manner not unlike open-grown Live Oaks. Allow plenty of room for proper development.

## GENERAL INFORMATION

**Scientific name:** *Magnolia kobus*

**Pronunciation:** mag-NO-lee-uh KOE-bus

**Common name(s):** Kobus Magnolia, Northern Japanese Magnolia

**Family:** *Magnoliaceae*

**USDA hardiness zones:** 5 through 8A (Fig. 2)

**Origin:** not native to North America

**Uses:** container or above-ground planter; specimen; no proven urban tolerance

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

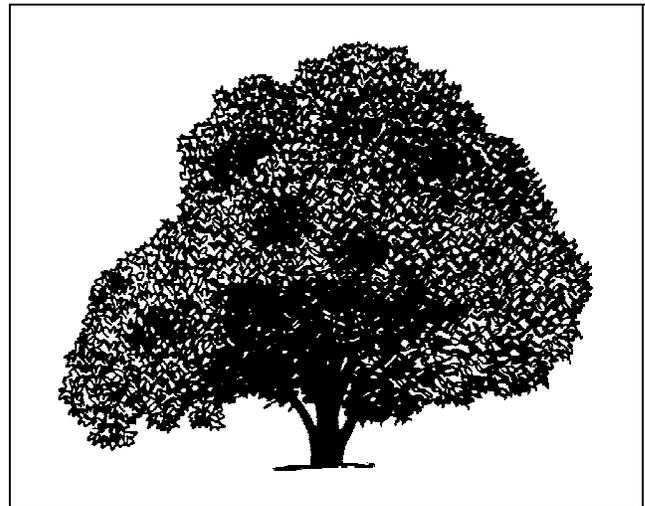


Figure 1. Mature Kobus Magnolia.

## DESCRIPTION

**Height:** 25 to 30 feet

**Spread:** 25 to 35 feet

**Crown uniformity:** irregular outline or silhouette

**Crown shape:** round; spreading

**Crown density:** dense

**Growth rate:** slow

**Texture:** coarse

### Foliage

**Leaf arrangement:** alternate (Fig. 3)

**Leaf type:** simple

**Leaf margin:** entire; undulate

**Leaf shape:** elliptic (oval); obovate

**Leaf venation:** banchidodrome; pinnate

**Leaf type and persistence:** deciduous

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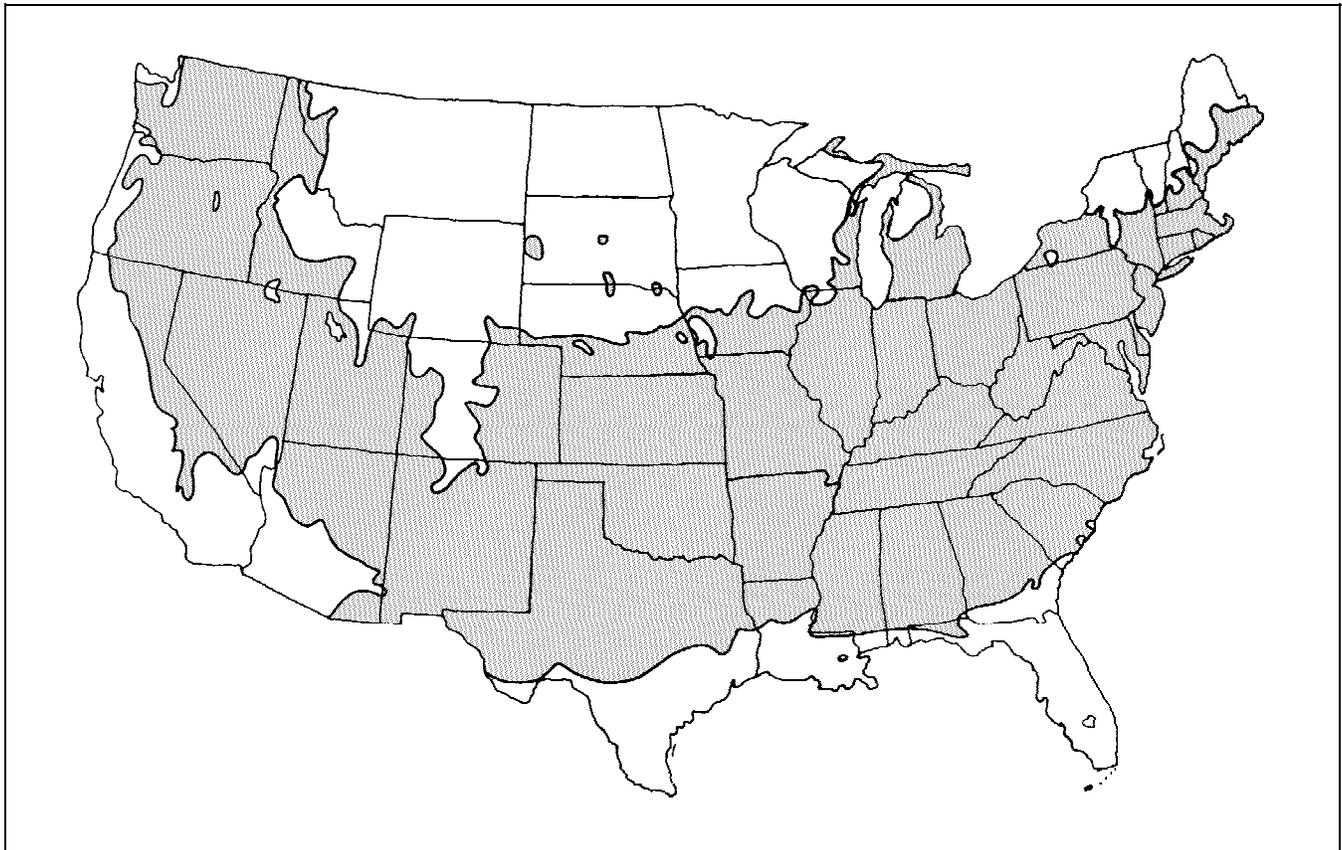


Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

**Leaf blade length:** 4 to 8 inches

**Leaf color:** green

**Fall color:** yellow

**Fall characteristic:** showy

### Flower

**Flower color:** pink; white

**Flower characteristics:** pleasant fragrance; spring flowering; very showy

### Fruit

**Fruit shape:** elongated; irregular

**Fruit length:** 1 to 3 inches

**Fruit covering:** dry or hard

**Fruit color:** pink; red

**Fruit characteristics:** attracts birds; no significant litter problem; showy

### Trunk and Branches

**Trunk/bark/branches:** bark is thin and easily damaged from mechanical impact; droop as the tree grows, and will require pruning for vehicular or pedestrian clearance beneath the canopy; routinely

grown with, or trainable to be grown with, multiple trunks; not particularly showy; no thorns

**Pruning requirement:** needs little pruning to develop a strong structure

**Breakage:** resistant

**Current year twig color:** brown; green

**Current year twig thickness:** medium; thick

### Culture

**Light requirement:** tree grows in part shade/part sun; tree grows in full sun

**Soil tolerances:** clay; loam; sand; slightly alkaline; acidic; well-drained

**Drought tolerance:** moderate

**Aerosol salt tolerance:** low

**Soil salt tolerance:** poor

### Other

**Roots:** surface roots are usually not a problem

**Winter interest:** tree has winter interest due to unusual form, nice persistent fruits, showy winter trunk, or winter flowers

**Outstanding tree:** tree has outstanding ornamental features and could be planted more

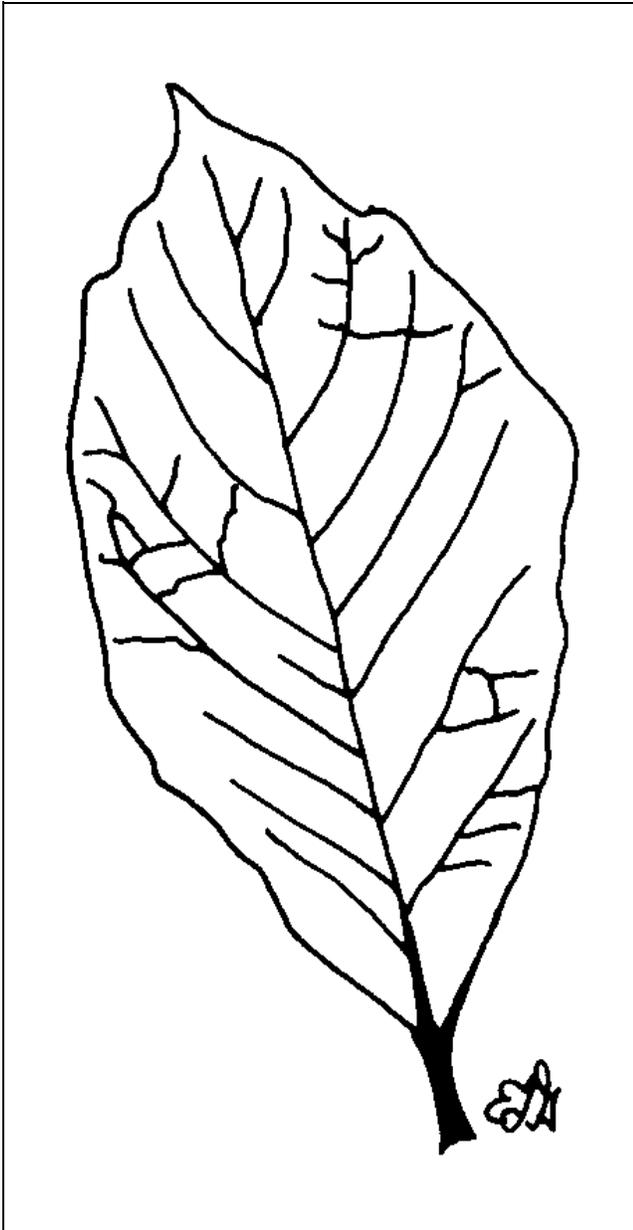


Figure 3. Foliage of Kobus Magnolia.

**Invasive potential:** little, if any, potential at this time

**Ozone sensitivity:** tolerant

**Verticillium wilt susceptibility:** susceptible

**Pest resistance:** no pests are normally seen on the tree

### USE AND MANAGEMENT

The lightly-fragrant blooms which appear in spring before the new leaves unfold are ivory-colored to pale pink and four inches in diameter. Young trees flower poorly. The pink fruits which develop split open to reveal bright red seeds, which sway from slender threads before dropping to the ground.

Kobus Magnolia should be grown in full sun or partial shade on any well-drained soil. Probably not for poorly-drained areas but supposedly tolerant of soil with an alkaline pH.

The cultivar 'Wada's Memory' has black-green leaves, large, six-inch blooms and an upright or columnar growth habit (at least in youth). It will be available at selected nurseries.

Propagation is easily done by cuttings.

### Pests and Diseases

No pests or diseases are of major concern but occasionally bothered by scale as are other Magnolias.