



Star Magnolia,

Magnolia stellata

Alex X. Niemiera, Professor, School of Plant and Environmental Sciences, Virginia Tech

Summary

Foliage: About 4 inches long; alternate; deciduous

Height: About 15 feet

Spread: About 10 feet

Shape: Oval to somewhat rounded

Main Features

Star magnolia is a small multi-stem tree that is known for its outstanding flower display in March (February in southern U.S. and April in northern U.S.). Flowers are about 3 to 4 inches in diameter and fragrant; outer sides of petals (actually called tepals; about 12 to 18 tepals) are white or blushed with pink while inner sides of tepals are white. There are numerous cultivars (more than 25) that vary in flower characteristics (color, size, tepal number, date of emergence, and fragrance), plant form, hardiness, and growth rate. Because this species flowers in late winter and early spring, flowers are vulnerable to low temperatures. In most years flowers (or flower buds) are damaged to some degree,

ranging from slightly damaged to total destruction, by sub-freezing temperatures. undamaged, the flower show is magnificent.

Plant Needs

Zone: 4 to 8

Light: Full sun to part shade

Moisture: Average

Soil type: Average

pH range: Acid

Functions

When flowers are

Star magnolia cultivars are suitable wherever a small tree is appropriate in a landscape. However, one should realize that the primary showy feature, the superb flower display, will only be realized about one in every four years since low temperatures damage flowers.

Care

Star magnolia is relatively carefree but will require irrigation during periods of drought.

Additional Information

Star magnolia is similar to saucer magnolia (*Magnolia ×soulangeana*); however, star magnolia generally flowers before saucer magnolia and has a finer texture in flower, in leaf, and without leaves. There are pink-flowered star magnolia cultivars (more pink than the typical outer tepal pink blush) such as 'Centennial Blush', 'Chrysanthemiflora', 'Jane Platt', 'Pink Stardust', and 'Waterlily'. 'Waterlily' is





Virginia Cooperative Extension

Virginia Tech • Virginia State University

www.ext.vt.edu