

Magnolia Stellata-Spring Blooming Captivating Deciduous Shrub

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Introduction:

Magnolia stellata, commonly referred as the star Magnolia, is a captivating deciduous shrub or small tree that graces gardens with its enchanting beauty. This plant is known for its elegant, star shaped white flowers that delicately unfurl in early spring, adding a touch of ethereal charm to the landscape. The blossoms emerge before foliage, creating a striking visual display.

Botanical Description:

A distinct and charming, slow growing deciduous small tree, forming a compact rounded specimen usually wider than high. Winter buds brown-hairy; leaves obovate-oblong to inversely lance shaped, up to 10 cm long, narrowed to short petiole, dull green above and pubescent on veins beneath when young. silky buds open to a star -shaped, 7.5cm across, pure white fragrant flowers before the leaves from mid-March to Early April. Sepals and petals are alike, usually 12 or more, 3.5-5.0 cm long, oblong; followed by an interrupted cone, with a pea-like scarlet seeds.



Star magnolia flower



Magnolia stellata

**Silky buds****Leaves emerging from buds****Distribution and habitat:**

Magnolia stellata is native to Japan. In terms of distribution, apart from its native range, it is also cultivated in various regions around the world for its ornamental value.

Uses:

Magnolia stellata is cultivated for its aesthetic appeal in gardens, parks and landscapes. The plant is valued for its early spring blooming, beautiful, star shaped fragrant white flowers that add visual interest. *Magnolia stellata* has several uses due to its ornamental qualities:

- Aesthetic focal point: planted as a specimen tree, it serves as a focal point in the landscape especially during the early spring when it produces its distinctive star-shaped flowers
- Seasonal interest: beyond its spring blooms, the attractive bark, green foliage during the growing season provides year-round interest.
- Garden borders: star magnolias are often used in garden borders or mixed shrub borders, adding variety, interest to the overall design.

Cultural significance:

Magnolias in general, are often symbols of beauty, endurance. The star magnolia, with its star-like blossoms, represents beauty and perfection. Magnolias, including the star magnolia are sometimes featured in literature, poetry and art contributing to their cultural symbolism and significance.

Cultivation:

Cultivating *Magnolia stellata* can be a rewarding gardening experience. Here are some guidelines for its cultivation:

Location:

Choose a well-drained location with partial to full sunlight. It needs at least 6 hours of direct sunlight. Magnolias prefer slightly Acidic to neutral soil. It requires a period of winter chill to flower properly.

Soil preparation:

Prepare the soil by adding organic matter like compost to improve drainage and fertility. Ensure good drainage to prevent water logging.

Propagation:

The propagation of *Magnolia stellata* can be done by several methods:

- 1. From seeds:** *Magnolia stellata* can be propagated from seeds. Collect seeds in the fall, sow them in a well-draining potting mixture, and keep them moist and warm. Germination may take several weeks to months
- 2. From cuttings:** Soft-wood or semi-hardwood cuttings taken in late spring or early summer can be used for the propagation. Dip the cut end in rooting hormone and plant it in a pot filled with a mix of peat moss and perlite. Keep the cuttings humid and warm until roots develop.



- 3. By grafting:** *Magnolia stellata* can be propagated through grafting, where a scion from a desirable cultivar is attached onto the rootstock of another compatible magnolia species.
- 4. Division:** For established magnolia plants, division of the root ball during the dormant season can create new plants, dig up the plant, divide the roots into sections, ensuring each section has sufficient roots and stems, and then replant them in suitable locations.

5. **Layering:** layering can be a successful propagation method for *Magnolia stellata*. In this propagation method a low branch or shoot is encouraged to root while still attached to the parent plant. This is achieved by burying a portion of the branch or shoot in the soil, allowing it to form roots. Layering is a reliable way to propagate *Magnolia stellata* while preserving the desirable characteristics of the parent plant.

Planting:

Plant *Magnolia stellata* in the spring or fall. Dig a hole twice as wide as the root ball. Place the plant in the centre and backfill the hole with the soil. Water thoroughly.

Fertilizers:

Add slow-release fertilizers in the spring. Follow the package instructions for proper application.

Pruning:

Prune magnolia in late winter or early spring when it is dormant. Be cautious not to over-prune, as this can stress the plant

Pests and diseases:

Magnolias can be susceptible to scale insects, aphids, powdery mildew. Regularly inspect the plant for any signs of pests and diseases and treat them promptly.