



***Magnolia kobus* var. *stellata* 'Rosea Jane Platt' 'Rosea Jane Platt' Star Magnolia¹**

Edward F. Gilman and Dennis G. Watson²

INTRODUCTION

Star Magnolia is the hardiest of the Magnolias (Fig. 1). It is a small tree or large shrub, 15 to 20 feet 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 on an older tree 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 light pink flowers on this cultivar 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, as it occasionally will.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Scientific name: *Magnolia kobus* var. *stellata* 'Rosea Jane Platt'

Pronunciation: mag-NO-lee-uh KOE-bus variety stell-AY-tuh

Common name(s): 'Rosea Jane Platt' Star Magnolia

Family: *Magnoliaceae*

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

Origin: not native to North America

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

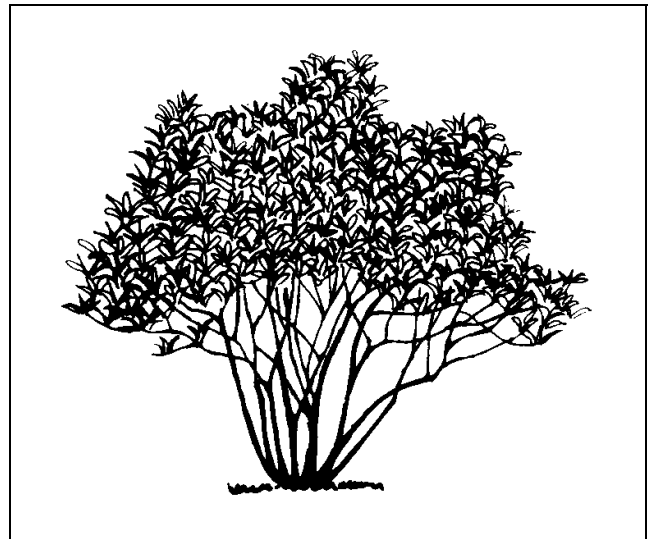


Figure 1. Middle-aged 'Rosea Jane Platt' Star Magnolia.

Availability: grown in small quantities by a small number of nurseries

DESCRIPTION

Height: 15 to 20 feet

Spread: 10 to 15 feet

Crown uniformity: symmetrical canopy with a regular (or smooth) outline, and individuals have more or less identical crown forms

Crown shape: round

Crown density: moderate

Growth rate: slow

Texture: medium

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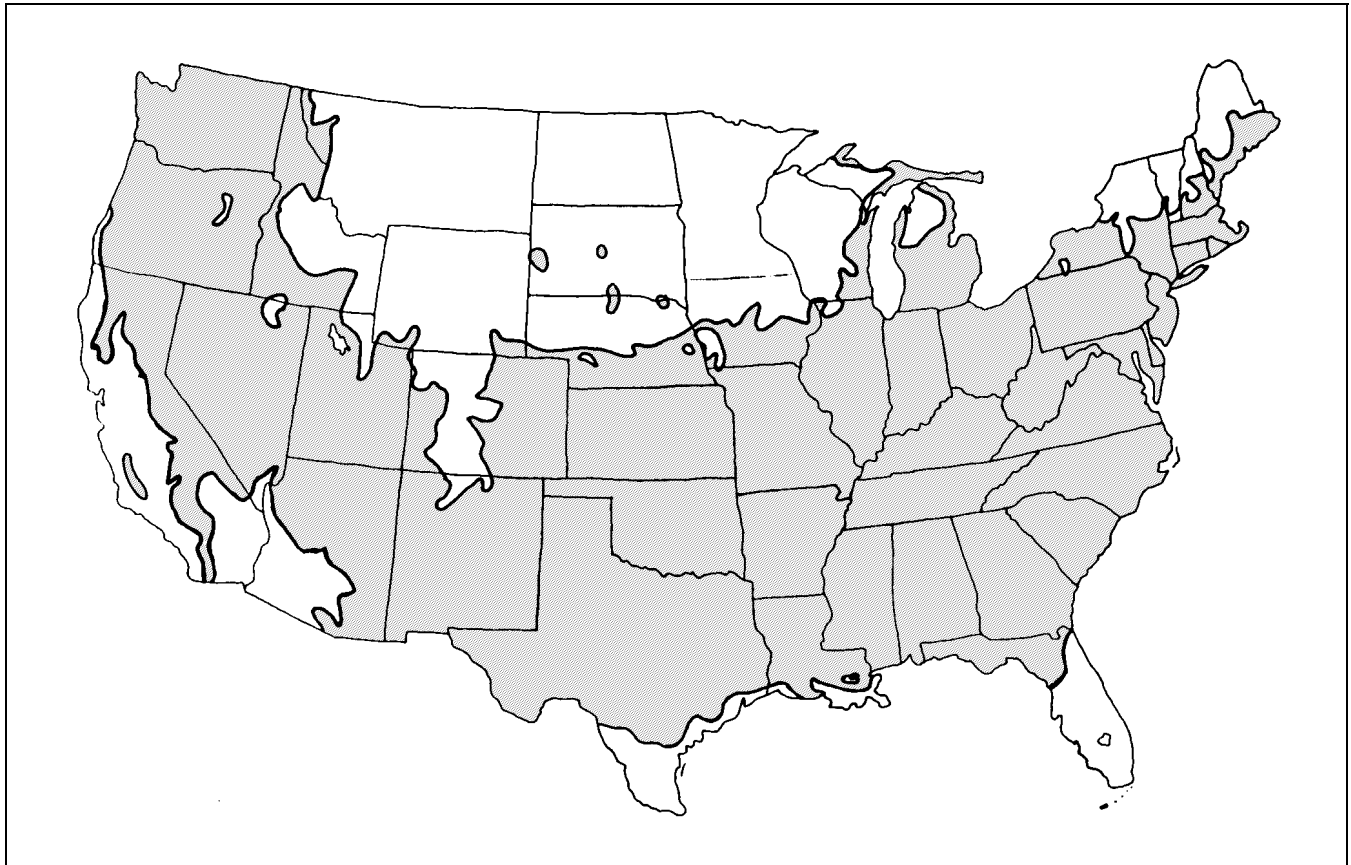


Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: alternate (Fig. 3)

Leaf type: simple

Leaf margin: entire

Leaf shape: oblong; obovate

Leaf venation: banchidodrome; pinnate

Leaf type and persistence: deciduous

Leaf blade length: 2 to 4 inches

Leaf color: green

Fall color: copper; yellow

Fall characteristic: not showy

Flower

Flower color: pink

Flower characteristics: spring flowering; very showy

Fruit

Fruit shape: elongated; irregular

Fruit length: 1 to 3 inches

Fruit covering: dry or hard

Fruit color: brown

Fruit characteristics: does not attract wildlife; inconspicuous and not showy; no significant litter problem

Trunk and Branches

Trunk/bark/branches: 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

Current year twig thickness: medium; thin

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: none

Soil salt tolerance: poor

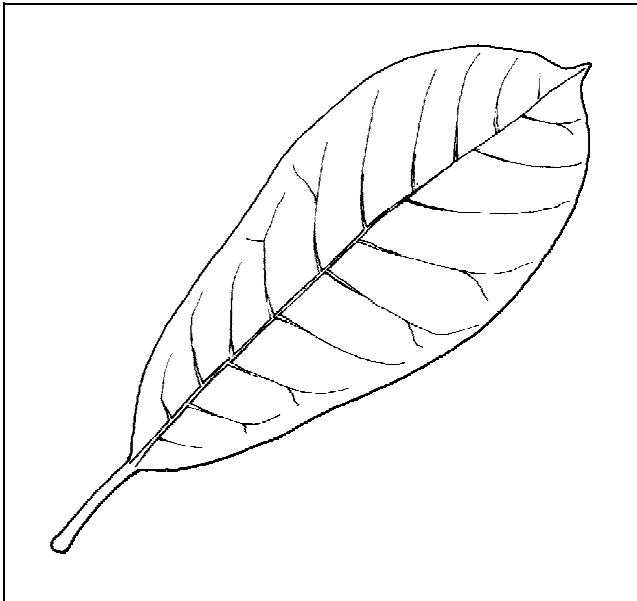


Figure 3. Foliage of 'Rosea Jane Platt' Star Magnolia.

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

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

Verticillium wilt susceptibility: susceptible

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 one report suggests moving it balled and burlapped when actively growing. I suspect this means after the tender growth has hardened off. In USDA hardiness zones 7 and 8, transplant in late winter while the plants are still dormant or plant from containers at any time.

There are a few other cultivars: 'Centennial' - some pink in petals; 'Keiskei' - flowers purplish on the outside; 'Rosea' (Pink Star Magnolia) - pale pink flowers; 'Rubra' (Red Star Magnolia) - purplish flowers, darker than 'Rosea'; 'Waterlily' - pink flower buds, white flowers, flowers larger with narrower petals. The "Little Girl Hybrids" have an upright habit and flower later than the species, thus avoiding frost

injury in most years. They include 'Ann', 'Betty', 'Jane', 'Judy', 'Randy', 'Ricki' and 'Susan'.

Pests

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.

Diseases

No diseases are particularly troublesome. Magnolia may be subject to leaf spots, blights, scabs, and black mildews caused by a large number of fungi or by the bacterium *Pseudomonas syringae*. 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.