



Bull Bay Magnolia

Born in the USA



A native of the south-eastern coast of America, the Bull Bay Magnolia has quite the history. Its flower was the emblem of the Confederate Army in the American Civil War.

It is the state flower of both Mississippi and Louisiana.

And, it was the oldest tree on the White House grounds and was so famous that it was for decades pictured on the back of the \$20 bill. It was planted by President Andrew Jackson nearly 200 years earlier and was reputedly planted as a seedling taken from Jackson's plantation, *The Hermitage* in Tennessee.

Propagation and cultivation

Magnolia grandiflora can produce seed by 10 years of age, although peak seed production is achieved closer to 25 years of age. Around 50% of seeds can germinate, and they are spread by birds and mammals. Also by layering or grafting. A large number of cultivars have been developed since the 18th Century including the popular Little Gem.

Family: *Magnoliaceae*

Genus: *Magnolia*

Botanic name: *Magnolia grandiflora*

Magnolia honours Pierre Magnol, a French botanist and director of the botanical garden at Montpellier France; *grandiflora* from the Latin words *grandis* meaning "big" and *flor* for "flower"

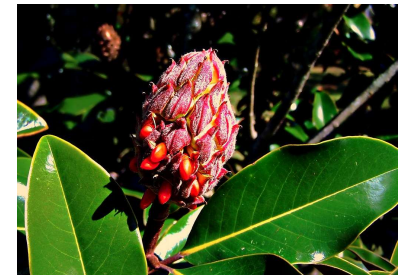
Also known as: Southern Magnolia, Bull Bay Magnolia

Origin: Native to south eastern United States, from Virginia to central Florida, and west to Texas and Oklahoma.

Habitat: Endemic to the evergreen lowland subtropical forests on the Gulf and south Atlantic coastal plain, it is found on the edges of bodies of water and swamps.

Description: A medium to large evergreen or seasonally deciduous tree which may grow 37m tall. It typically has a single stem (or trunk) and a pyramidal shape.

The leaves are dark green, stiff and leathery with a brown velvety underside. They are oval shaped, 12–20cm long and 6–12cm broad with smooth margins alternately arranged on branches.



The tree flowers in December–January the large, showy, lemon citronella-scented flowers are white, up to 30cm across with six or more petals with a waxy texture growing from the tips of twigs on mature trees.

Flowering is followed by the rose-coloured fruit, ovoid polyfollicle, 7.5-10cm long and 30cm wide. The fruits are numerous, orange/red or brown and hang on threadlike attachments from a woody like structure of the floral axis.

Uses: *Magnolia grandiflora* is a very popular ornamental tree throughout its native range in the coastal plain of the Gulf/South Atlantic states, as well as being widely cultivated around the world in streets, homes and parks. Exceptionally large trees have been reported in the far southern United States with a specimen in Smith County, Mississippi, which stands at 37m tall, being the national champion. The timber, known simply as magnolia, is hard and heavy, and has been used commercially to make furniture, pallets, and veneer. In the USA squirrels, opossums, quail, and turkey are known to eat the seeds. Beetles are attracted to the nectar which is rich in protein and are a pollinator.

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Interesting fact

Many broadleaved evergreen trees are known as bays for their resemblance to the leaves of the red bay (*Persea borbonia*), with the *Magnolia grandiflora* species known as the Bull Bay for its huge size or alternatively because cattle have been reported eating its leaves.

Sources:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Magnolia_grandiflora
<https://rbgsydney.gardenexplorer.org/taxon-38294.aspx>