

Evergreen Sweetbay Magnolia

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Magnolia virginiana var. australis

- **Recommended Use:** Ornamental, wildlife habitat
- **Exposure:** Full sun to partial shade
- **Size: Height:** 50 feet; width: 30 feet
- **Habit:** Upright
- **Growth:** Moderate to fast, moderate lifespan
- **Maintenance Category:** Low maintenance
- **Water Use:** Average to low
- **Highlights:** Good landscape accent tree; evergreen; native.



Evergreen sweetbay magnolia has compact flowers, which somewhat resemble smaller versions of Southern magnolia flowers.

Summary

The evergreen sweetbay magnolia is a hardy, medium-sized native tree. This flowering evergreen tree produces creamy white, fragrant flowers in midspring and sporadically in the summertime. Bright red seeds mature on conelike pods, adding more visual interest. Foliage is dark green with a silver “lining” on the back side, making the leaves appear to “dance” in the breeze. Evergreen sweetbay magnolia has an upright growth habit. It can be grown as a single trunk standard or a multitrunk tree. This Louisiana Super Plant is a wonderful landscape accent tree. Use in foundation plantings, near patios or at the edge of woodland areas. Wildlife eat the seeds, and birds utilize the tree for nesting. Hummingbirds and insect pollinators are attracted to the blooms. Evergreen sweetbay magnolia is a host plant for tiger swallowtail, Palamedes swallowtail and spicebush swallowtail butterflies, as well as the sweetbay silkmoth.

Requirements

- Choose healthy nursery-grown stock. Correct any circling roots before planting.
- Fall and winter are the best time to plant. This allows for root establishment before the spring growth period.
- Evergreen sweetbay magnolia is well adapted to many soil conditions.
- Applying one-half pound of 10-10-10 fertilizer at the base of the tree in springtime in the first year of establishment will accelerate growth. Do not fertilize in the fall or winter.

Growth Habit

- Evergreen sweetbay magnolia has a natural conical shape and should be encouraged to grow in this shape through light pruning.
- This tree can be grown as a single trunk or multitrunk specimen.



The most identifiable characteristic of sweetbay magnolia are the silver undersides of leaves. This silver underside gives a striking texture on windy days.

Care and Maintenance

- Ensure proper soil moisture while the tree is getting established. Mulch young trees to help regulate soil moisture and keep weed pressure down.
- Little to no maintenance pruning should be required for this tree once the desired shape is established. Light shaping and pruning the tree's low branches can help to guide the final form of the tree.
- Fallen leaves are slow to break down and should be raked and removed or used as a mulch material.
- Evergreen sweetbay magnolia has few pest or disease issues. Scale insects and leaf spot can be observed but generally require no treatment and do not inhibit the growth of the tree.
- Magnolias contain natural antimicrobial, insecticidal and nematocidal properties that help to reduce potential threats from pests and diseases.



While evergreen sweetbay magnolia can be trained to a standard single-trunk tree, they are often seen in the natural multitrunk form. Bright red seeds mature on conelike pods.

For more information on evergreen sweetbay magnolia and other Louisiana Super Plants, contact your local LSU AgCenter extension office or visit www.LSUAgCenter.com/SuperPlants.



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