Admire the sights and scents on the branches of more than 200 elegant trees, as velvety silver buds and saucer-sized pink, white, and magenta flowers make an appearance in this always spectacular annual bloom at the Botanical Garden.

Endemic to Asia and the New World, Magnolias are ancient flowering trees that have endeared themselves to humans for millennia. Here in cool, foggy San Francisco, we cultivate species from across most of their range, from the monsoon-influenced, temperate forests of the Himalayas to the cloud forests of Mesoamerica.

During your visit make sure to stop at the Garden’s Bookstore and Plant Shop for special Magnolia items.

Enjoy the Magnolias? Continue exploring the Gardens of Golden Gate Park! Warm up at the Conservatory of Flowers and experience the peaceful Japanese Tea Garden with a Gardens Pass—unlimited visits to the Gardens for three days at a discounted price! Buy onsite or online today.

Visit the website for a complete list of programs and events celebrating this magnificent bloom!
ABOUT THE MAGNIFICENT MAGNOLIA GARDEN COLLECTION

In the winter of 1940, horticultural history was made at the newly-opened San Francisco Botanical Garden when its exotic cup and saucer magnolia (Magnolia campbellii) became the first of its kind to bloom in the United States. Huge crowds of excited and curious visitors stood in long lines to see the stunning, large, pink blossoms of this famous Magnolia that still stands in the Garden today (map #8). That was just the beginning. The Garden is now home to more than 200 Magnolias—many rare and historic. The Garden’s current collection includes 53 species, 41 cultivars, and 6 hybrids. This collection is one of the most significant collection for conservation purposes in the United States. Read more about the Garden’s prized specimens and enjoy!

1 Magnolia laevifolia ‘Strybing Compact’ – This cultivar of Magnolia laevifolia was selected here at San Francisco Botanical Garden for its compact form. While ‘Strybing Compact’ is more shrub-like, wild Magnolia laevifolia can grow up to 3 meters in height.

2 Magnolia campbellii ‘Darjeeling’ – Thought by many to be the most spectacular of all the Magnolias that bloom at the Garden, this Himalayan selection was propagated from a tree at the Lloyd Botanic Garden in Darjeeling, India. It offers magnificent deep pink flowers emerging on leafless branches for a dramatic display.

3 Magnolia dawsoniana – This endangered Magnolia from China is named after the first superintendent of Harvard University’s Arnold Arboretum, Jackson Thornton Dawson. It has large pink flowers that droop with age and resemble flags blowing in the wind.

4 Magnolia campbellii ‘Rosea’ – This endangered Magnolia is found in just five locations in the cloud forests of Chiquas, Mexico. Its limited habitat is threatened by human activities such as timber harvesting and agriculture.

5 Magnolia macrophylla var. dealbata – Commonly called bigleaf magnolia, this native of Mexico is appropriately named, as the large leaves can reach up to 30 inches in length. The flowers are cream-colored with a semi-sweet scent. This is one of few magnolias in the garden that typically blooms in the summer months.

6 Magnolia liliiflora – Native to China, this compact, rounded, shrubby, deciduous Magnolia typically ranges from 8 to 12 feet tall and as wide. Its goblet- or lily-shaped, purplish-pink flowers appear in spring of, or shortly after, leaf development. The specific epithet liliiflora indicates that its flowers are lily-like.

7 Magnolia × soulangeana ‘Rustica Rubra’ – In 1820 Etienne Soulange-Bodin cross-pollinated M. denudata with M. liliiflora to produce the very popular ‘Rustica Rubra’. Since then, there have been many selections from the hybrid resulting in many different cultivars including ‘Rustica Rubra’, a Dutch clone raised at the end of the nineteenth century in Boskoop. The reddish-purple flowers, pink-white within, feature the classic goblet shape.

8 Magnolia campbellii – This individual was the very first Magnolia campbellii to bloom in the United States. It was planted in 1924 in the Garden by the Garden’s first Director, Eric Walther, and first bloomed 17 years later in 1940. Commonly called the cup and saucer magnolia, this Himalayan native has large, fragrant flowers that can range in color from white to shades of light to deep pink.

9 Magnolia denudata – M. denudata has the longest known history of cultivation among magnolias, dating back to the Tang Dynasty (618 C.E.). Called the “yulan” or “jade orchid”, it is one of China’s earliest known flowers. Its flowers are celebrated on ancient Chinese embroideries, scrolls, and porcelains in scenes of the countryside. This was the first Magnolia species from the East introduced to the United States. Read more about the Garden’s prized specimens and enjoy!

10 Magnolia campbellii ‘Strybing White’ – The largest Magnolia at the Garden, ‘Strybing White’ towers over 80 feet. This special white form was grown from a tree purchased in India in 1934, propagated at the Golden Gate Park Nursery, and planted here in 1940.

11 Magnolia dolospor – An evergreen Magnolia, the commonly named “sweet michelia” was first described near Kathmandu, Nepal around 1803. The highly fragrant white flowers are about 6 inches across, opening from velvety-brown buds. This species is often grown as a street tree in the Bay Area.

12 Magnolia garrettii – Native to a small area of southern Yunnan, China, and northern Vietnam and Thailand, Magnolia garrettii is a rapidly growing evergreen Magnolia with deep pink to purple flowers. A more recent introduction into horticulture, this species was first introduced into horticultural collections in Austria in the 1990s.

13 Magnolia × alba – This beautiful, subtropical tree has deeply fragrant flowers from which an extract is used as a primary ingredient in some of the world’s most expensive perfumes. This hybrid is a cross between two Asian species, M. champaca and M. montana.

14 Magnolia grandiflora – The southern magnolia is a popular ornamental around the world, prized for its large, fragrant flowers and lustrous, evergreen leaves. Magnolia grandiflora is one of only a handful of Magnolia species native to North America.

15 Magnolia × velitchii – M. × velitchii is a deciduous magnolia, meaning that it loses its leaves seasonally. It is a cross between M. campbellii and M. denudata, and was originally produced by Robert Veitch in 1907. Those parent plants were chosen for the beauty of their blooms and overall hardiness.

16 Magnolia campbellii ‘Late Pink’ – Introduced at the Garden from seed purchased in 1934 from G. Ghose and Co. in Darjeeling, India, the name ‘Late Pink’ describes how the flowers of this Magnolia appear 2 to 4 weeks later than other M. campbellii specimens in our collection.

17 Magnolia sprengeri – This deciduous Magnolia species is native to forests in central China, where mature specimens have been found growing to heights of 21 meters. Its rosy colored flowers appear before the leaves emerge and have a lovely fragrance.

18 Magnolia zenii – The rarest Magnolia in the Garden and IUCN red-listed as critically endangered, only a few dozen of these plants were found when the species was first described in China in 1931. As of 2014, just 18 individuals are known to grow in the wild on the north slopes of Mount Baohua, where they are protected in a botanical reserve.

19 Magnolia amoena – This species was first described from an individual found on China’s Mt. Hwang in 1933. The species name amoena is Latin for beautiful or pleasant. This particular tree was a gift from the Shanghai Botanical Garden, presented to the Garden by then-Mayor Diane Feinstein in 1982.

20 Magnolia stellata ‘Rosea’ – The species name, stellata, means star. Typically a white flowered species with narrow tepals radiating out like a star, this cultivar, ‘Rosea’, has fragrant pink flowers.

CHECK OUT THE MAGNIFICENT MAGNOLIAS ON YOUR SMARTPHONE

3. Tap link that will appear on screen

4. Learn more about each featured Magnolia on Garden Explorer.

BECOME A MEMBER

Support the Garden of Golden Gate Park and enjoy great benefits year-round:

- Free admission (with a guest) to the Botanical Garden, Conservatory of Flowers, and Japanese Tea Garden
- 10% Discount at the Plant Shop, the Bookstore, and local nurseries
- Reciprocal membership at 345 public gardens
- Discounted tickets and pre-sales for popular programs like Garden Camp and Holiday Wreath Making

Join now through March 15 and get a free plant at the Plant Shop ($15 value).

Memberships start at $70. Sign up at the kiosk or online at sbg.org/membership.

SHARING IS CARING

Take some beautiful magnolia photos? Tag us and share using #magnificentmagnolias for a chance to be featured on the Garden’s account!

Social media is also where we share the latest bloom updates, follow us on Instagram (@sfbotanicalgarden), Facebook (@sfbotanicalgarden), and Twitter (@SFBGGS).

BOOKSTORE & PLANT SHOP

Enjoy special Magnolia items in the Garden Bookstore. Purchase a plant at the Plant Shop and bring the Garden home!

ABOUT SAN FRANCISCO BOTANICAL GARDEN

San Francisco Botanical Garden is a living museum within Golden Gate Park, offering 55 acres of both landscaped gardens and open spaces, showcasing 8,000 different kinds of plants from around the world.

ABOUT GARDENS OF GOLDEN GATE PARK

Gardens of Golden Gate Park is a public/private partnership between the San Francisco Recreation & Park Department and the San Francisco Botanical Garden Society (a nonprofit 501c3 organization doing business as the “Gardens of Golden Gate Park”) to jointly operate the Conservatory of Flowers, Japanese Tea Garden, and San Francisco Botanical Garden.