**Magnolia stellata** - Star Magnolia (*Magnoliaceae*)

*Magnolia stellata* is an upright, large shrub or small tree with layered sympodial branches that create a mounding effect with age. Star Magnolia has white showy spring flowers that emerge before the foliage, but are frequently browned by frosts.

### FEATURES

**Form**
- large shrub or small multi-trunked ornamental tree
- maturing slowly to 15’ tall x 15’ wide
- upright oval growth habit in youth, becoming spreading and mounding
- slow growth rate

**Culture**
- full sun to partial shade
- performs best in partial sun in moist, acidic, deep soils but is quite adaptable to a wide range of soils, soil pHs, pollution, and even wet soils
- virtually no disease or pest problems, although sap suckers may encircle the trunk on occasion with small holes
- commonly available, primarily in B&B but also in container form

**Foliage**
- medium to dark green, deciduous, alternate, distinctly obovate, to 4” long
- autumn color is green to yellowish green in Nov.

**Flowers**
- winter floral buds are prominent and fuzzy, giving rise to showy flowers that have narrow petals and sepals (tepals) that are white (sometimes light pink or rose) and slightly fragrant, and emerge in Apr. before the foliage
- in Ohio, flowers are frequently browned or killed by early spring frosts and freezes, and may remain attached to the plant until mid-spring
- may sporadically have a very few flowers open anytime from late summer to late autumn, but this does not affect spring flowering

**Fruits**
- sparse aggregate fruits split open in Sept., but are not ornamental and seldom produced in significant quantities

**Twigs**
- gray-brown, with prominent leaf scars, exhibiting distinctive sympodial branching
- terminal floral and vegetative buds are densely and noticeably pubescent (fuzzy), and are much larger than the lateral buds
- stems are more dense but much thinner as compared to those of *Magnolia x soulangiana* (Saucer Magnolia) and other Hybrid Magnolias, and buds are not quite as large (especially the floral buds)

**Trunk**
- multi-trunked, with bark that is light gray to gray-white and smooth, with the trunks sometimes allowed to remained branched to the ground, even at maturity

### USAGE

**Function**
- foundation, specimen, entranceway, or spring accent

**Texture**
- medium texture in foliage and when bare
- thick density in foliage and when bare

**Assets**
- outstanding floral display in a frost-free early Apr., with flowers slightly fragrant
- flowers at a young age
- fuzzy winter terminal buds
- subtly ornamental smooth gray bark (if limbed up into tree form)
- can be utilized as a deciduous privacy screen near foundations due to its dense summer foliage

**Liabilities**
- frost often kills the emerging flowers
- temperatures below –10 degree F or harsh winter winds may actually kill the floral buds, long before they are due to emerge

**Habitat**
- Zones 4 to 8
- Native to Japan

### SELECTIONS

**Alternates**
- companion trees and shrubs with prominent early spring floral displays (*Chaenomeles japonica, Cornus mas, Corylopsis glabrescens, Hamamelis x intermedia,* etc.)
- ornamental shrubs with good growth habit, floral character, or sympodial branching (*Corylus avellana 'Contorta', Rhododendron catawbiense, Viburnum plicatum var. tomentosum 'Mariesii', etc.)

**Cultivars - Variants – Related species**
- *M. stellata* 'Royal Star' - a double-flowering form, with many white tepals opening slightly later than the species form
- *M. stellata* 'Rosea' - light pink flowers; this cultivar was used as one parent in crosses made with *M. liliiflora 'Nigra'* to yield many of the modern hybrid Magnolias, all of which flower slightly later in the spring, mature at about 10’ tall, have a rounded or upright growth habit, and purplish-red shades of flowers; they include 'Ann', 'Betty', 'Jane', 'Judy', 'Pinkie', 'Randy', 'Ricki', and 'Susan'