

# Magnolia à grandes fleurs

## *Magnolia grandiflora* (magnoliaceae)

Planté: environs 1900

Amériques



### Pourquoi on l'aime:

- Pour son feuillage persistant et pour ses fleurs parfumées
- »Je l'aime pour sa présence, habillé d'un feuillage coriace et persistant, sa belle floraison blanche en Juillet.» AG

### Notes :

- Arbres ou arbustes à fleurs et au feuillage persistant ou caduc, classés dans la famille des magnoliacées.
- Il en existe plus d'une centaine d'espèces aux formes, tailles et couleurs variées. Des traces de spécimens fossilisés seraient datées de 95 millions d'années. Le nom de Magnolia est donné par le père Charles Plumier (1646-1704), botaniste, naturaliste et voyageur, et excellent dessinateur, en l'honneur de Pierre Magnol (1638-1715), botaniste et directeur du jardin botanique de Montpellier. Le père Charles Plumier a décrit et dessiné cette plante, ainsi qu'un très grand nombre d'autres espèces, au cours de ses voyages successifs à partir de 1689, aux Amériques, Guadeloupe, Martinique, Saint-Domingue (Haïti), puis Brésil.
- La plante est probablement introduite en France à Nantes en 1711, par Rolland-Michel Barrin (cf N°2 Tulipier de Virginie), puis planté 20 ans plus tard dans les serres de René Darquistade (1680-1754) maire de Nantes entre 1735 et 1747. Après de nombreux essais de marcottages aériens, le magnolia est multiplié et diversifié dans l'Europe entière.
- Originaire des Amériques et fleur officielle de Louisiana.
- Symbolise la beauté, la pureté, la persévérance



## Magnolias on Light Blue Velvet Cloth

1885

painting by Martin Johnson Heade (Museum: Art Institute of Chicago)

Courtesy of Wikimedia Commons

For more: <https://www.wikidata.org/wiki/Q20742549>



Film "Magnolia"  
Musique Aimee Mann - Wise Up (Music  
from the Motion Picture)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ec8SJqGd6o0>

## Magnolias and the Meaning of Life: Science, Poetry, Existentialism , Maria Popova, Marginalien, 16.4.23

Pastel-colored apparitions of tenderness, magnolias are titans of resilience. They have been consecrating Earth with their beauty since the time dinosaurs roamed it, long before bees evolved [to give our planet its colors](#), pioneering the exquisitely orchestrated pollination strategies by which [perfect flowers](#) survive.

Today, for a precious week in spring, they bloom to remind us that life is livable, then die to remind us that it must be lived.

When Western botanists first encountered these ravishing flowering trees on an island in the West Indies, they named them after the trailblazing French botanist Pierre Magnol — originator of the concept of plant families and the first person to devise a system of natural classification, a century ahead of Linnaeus. The word *magnolia* was heartily adopted, so that by the time Linnaeus published his *Species Plantarum*, introducing his revolutionary binomial naming system, the magnolia appeared in it as a single species. Today, we know there to be hundreds, some of them deciduous and some evergreen, with the American evergreen species *Magnolia grandiflora* the most widely recognizable.

Magnolias have a long history of enchanting humanity with their splendor and symbolic intimations. As early as the year 650, Buddhist monks in China made of the wild magnolia a garden deity, planting a white-blooming *Magnolia denudata* at their temple as a symbol of purity. The magnolia planted at the White House from a Tennessee sprout in the 1820s lived through thirty-nine presidencies and came to grace the back of the \$20 bill for seven decades. *Magnolia sieboldii* is the national flower of North Korea, and *Magnolia grandiflora* the state flower of both Mississippi and Louisiana.

Magnolias have long figured in our efforts to mediate between the body and the mind — the mediation we call medicine. In the early nineteenth century, American physicians began using the dried bark of *Magnolia virginiana*, *Magnolia acuminata*, and *Magnolia tripetala* to treat malaria, rheumatism, and gout. For millennia, Chinese medicine has been transmuting the bark of *Magnolia officinalis* into a tonic known as *hou-phu*, used for treating neurological and gastric disorders. Twentieth-century science isolated from it the compounds magnolol and honokio — sedatives with relaxant effects on the central nervous system, found to help reduce tremors in Parkinson’s patients. Throughout Asia, the common drug *hsin-i*, made of the flowering buds of several magnolia species, is used to treat headaches, fever, allergies, and respiratory disorders.

Humans are not the only animals to wrest vitality from magnolias. Migrating songbirds relish them, drawn to the bright seeds and nourished by their unusually high fat content of 40% — more than twice that of the avocado, [Earth’s most nutritious fruit](#). Squirrels, raccoons, and possums also savor them. Their leaves are a favorite food for the larvae of the giant leopard moth — one of Earth’s most majestic and resplendent insects.

Humans, too, have feasted on the magnolia — in rural England, the petals of *Magnolia grandiflora* are used to spice stews, in Japan the young leaves and buds of *Magnolia hypoleuca* are broiled as a vegetable, and in other Asian cuisines the flower buds of various magnolia species are used to scent tea and flavor rice. The aromatic *hoba miso* is made with magnolia.

To me, magnolias are the most existential of trees, their weeklong bloom an open-mouth scream of exhilaration at the transient miracle of being alive. There is cruelty to beauty so fierce and so fleeting. “Blossoms on our magnolia ignite the morning with their murderous five days’ white,” Robert Lowell wrote in a poem. But there is also kindness in its gentle reminder not to squander a single moment of living. In five days, a whole life can spin on its axis.