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Confused Catalog

The name's the same, but Wayside Gardens Co., formerly of Mentor, Ohio, is now in business at Hodges, South Carolina 29695, as a subsidiary of the Park Seed Co. I haven't yet seen plants from the new mail order source, but the catalog in some respects is improved over the former production — at least it gives U.S.D.A. hardiness zone ratings, and for some items even warns against their planting in areas where winters are too mild.

Wayside Gardens catalog for Spring 1977 is still confused when it comes to Magnolias, though it does now spell *soulangiana* without an "e." Its color photo for *M. virginiana* is obviously *M. grandiflora*, a species not offered. For the 'Merrill' cultivar of *M. X loebneri*, still incorrectly named "Dr. Merrill," the confusion seems compounded, and it is incorrectly referred to *M. stellata*. According to the 1977 catalog description, *M. stellata* is "one of the loveliest of early flowering shrubs." So far, so good, but watch the switch in the next sentence: "Unfortunately it is one of the most difficult trees to transplant. In addition to that, it is very slow growing." The catalog writer goes on to say that "Dr. Merrill" transplants without difficulty, its "growth is rapid and the ultimate size is about 10 feet in height and 8 feet in diameter . . . 24 to 30 in. . . . Each \$18.00."

Growth of *M. stellata* will vary with the climate, the environment where planted, and the clone one uses. However, in good soil at Urbana, Illinois, such cultivars as *M. stellata* 'Waterlily' and 'Royal Star' will exceed 10 feet in height in a few years. As for the more vigorous *M. X loebneri*, 'Merrill', it is truly a tree, almost as vigorous as *M. kobus*. One Urbana specimen about 20 years old is already to the roof of a two-story house, and I see nothing to stop it from ultimately reaching 50 feet.

Other *M. X loebneri* cultivars vary in growth rate, but nearly all seem more vigorous than pure *M. stellata*. 'Leonard Messel' (which both the wholesale Wells Nursery and the 1977 Burpee catalog mislabel as *stellata*) seems nearly as fast growing as 'Merrill'. Both 'Spring Snow' and its seedling 'Ballerina' are somewhat smaller trees than 'Merrill', but have more tepals in their slightly later flowers, with better fragrance, than either 'Merrill' or 'Leonard Messel'.

J.C. McD.