

# PYRAMID MAGNOLIA

(*Magnolia pyramidata*)

Largest Living Specimen

On Record In

United States

1969

Circumference at 4½ ft. - 76 in.

Average Crown Spread - 37 ft.

Height - 60 ft.

TEXAS FOREST SERVICE

College Station, Texas 77843

rose upon ripening. Overall, the pyramid magnolia is a handsome tree.

Horticulturally the magnolia family is highly valued for its ornamentals. This is especially true for the genus *Magnolia*. The pyramid magnolia, interestingly, was first cultivated in about 1825, but evidently has

never been commonly available from nurseries as an ornamental. J.C. McDaniel, president of the American Magnolia Society, reports that one nursery in Oregon has pyramid magnolia plants for sale. These plants apparently come from a Mississippi seed source. Pyramid magnolias from Mississippi sources have also flowered successfully at Harrisburg, Illinois, and have flowered and appear to be reasonably hardy in North Manchester, Indiana.

Because the Texas pyramid magnolia trees generally have larger flowers than those in the eastern part of the range, it's surprising that the species hasn't become more popular as an ornamental in east Texas. Again, this is probably due to lack of availability in nurseries. The Lowrey Nursery, 2323 Sleepy Hollow Road, Conroe, Texas, 77302, is the only nursery we know of that has a few plants in cans. Due to its large fragrant and abundant flowers, its ascending habit, and its singularly shaped leaves, the pyramid magnolia possesses the potential to become a prized ornamental in east Texas gardens and in many other areas.

A final note: The state champion pyramid magnolia (which also is the national champion), as recognized by the Texas Forest Service, is in Newton County, Texas. This tree is 193 cm. (76 inches) in circumference, is 17 m. (57 feet) tall, and has an average crown spread of 11 m. (37 feet).

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## Pay One Magnolia, or Else!

How long should a long-term lease be? Well, it depends in one happy instance, in central Illinois, to be for one year, multiplied by the number of magnolia species in U.S. cultivation. Or by stretching the legal language a little, you might throw in the known hybrids. Or even cultivars, which would make the lease practically perpetual.

It all began when McLean County, Illinois, decided to convert its annually renewed lease of 27 acres of county property to the city of Normal for a park. The county and city decided to switch to a long-term lease arrangement. The deal?

The City of Normal would agree, during the period of the lease, to plant one Magnolia tree each year of a different variety within the park.

This language was inserted into the lease agreement through the persuasion of a member of the board of McLean County, John English, Rural Route 3, Bloomington,

Illinois, 61701. Mr. English thinks this not only will develop a magnolia collection in the park, but should interest the whole community in planting more of the uncommon and better varieties in their own gardens. He said the county and city hope to make a media event of the annual "rent" planting.

In his letter to the American Magnolia Society asking suggestions for going about the project and teaching members of the Normal Beautification Committee how to grow their own seedlings and to graft and bud magnolias, Mr. English explained he needed help because: "I am a novice as far as magnolias are concerned ..."

Maybe so, but he's no novice as far as public relations savvy goes, and whatever help he needs we have no doubt he'll be able to get. He's already got one marvelous offer of cooperation from a fellow who lives in the adjoining Champaign County and who happens to be AMS president.