# Magnolia Sinensis (Rehder & Wilson) Stapf[11]

This is a critical species closely related to *M. globosa* which would appear to differ mainly in its usually more acute leaves, its shoots dark purple the second year, and by the rufous gray pubescence on the shoot and peduncle and occasionally on the under surface of the leaves, also, and by its larger fruit.

M. sinensis is also related to *M. wilsonii* which differs in its smaller, oblong-lanceolate to oblong-elliptic leaves, its usually purple shoots and its smaller flowers. There are other slight differences that are more noticeable in the living flowers than in dried specimens. It was first described by my colleague, Alfred Rehder, and myself as *M. globosa* var. sinensis. Later I was disposed to consider it not distinguishable from *M. globosa* which has been collected at a number of stations in north-western Yunnan and adjacent Thibet and named *M. tsarongensis* by Professor W. Wright Smith. I have seen a number of Yunnan specimens. They all agree in the color and character of the pubescence and in the shape of the leaves with typical *M. globosa* from
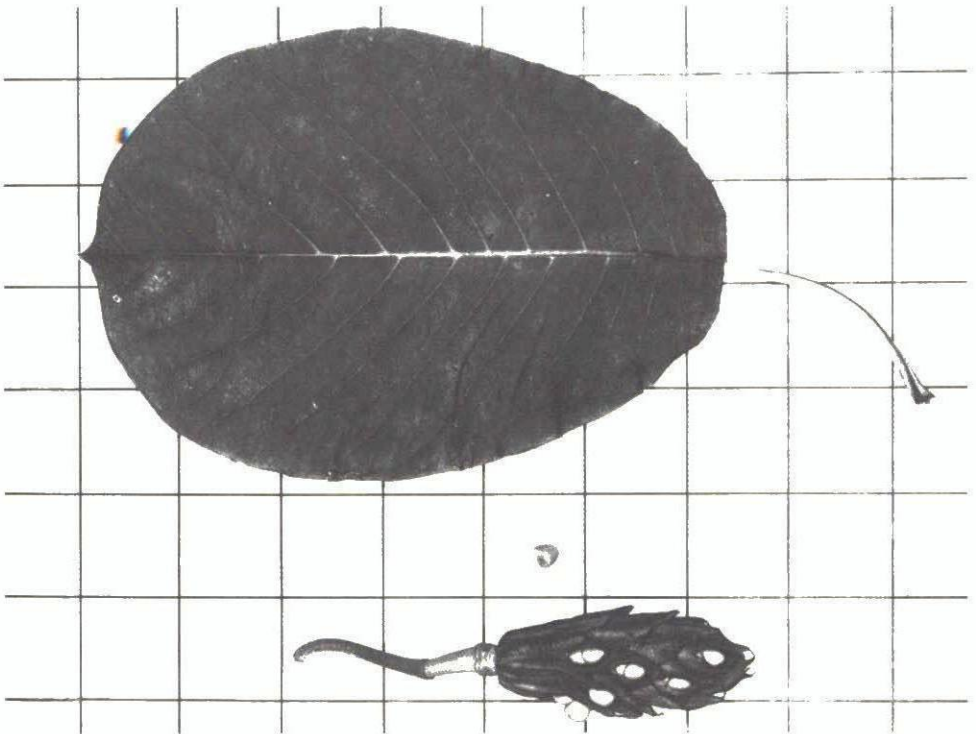
Leaf and fruit of Magnolia sieboldii *var.* sinensis *on grid of one-inch squares.*
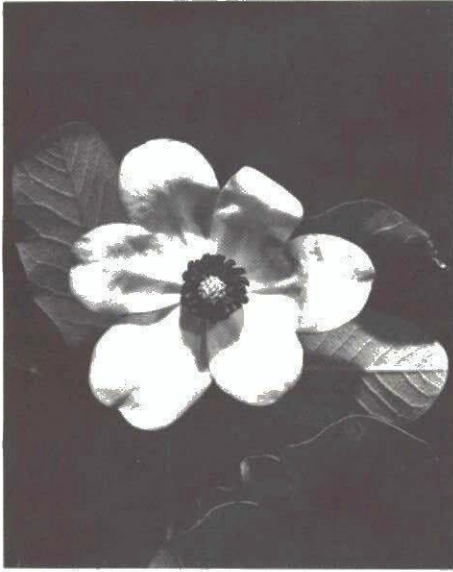
Magnolia sieboldii *var.* sinensis.

Sikkim. Stapf considers my Chinese plant entitled to specific rank and until it has been adequately studied under cultivation it is perhaps best to accept their view. At any rate this is likely to lead to less confusion in the future.

This new Magnolia is known to me from moist woodlands and thickets on the mountains of Wenchuan Hsien only, where it is not uncommon between elevations of from 6000 to 8000 feet above sea level. The largest specimens I saw were not more than 15 feet tall, but more in diameter, the habit being loose and straggling. The flowers, though freely borne, are much hidden by the leaves and are only seen to good advantage when looked at from below. I discovered it in June 1908 and in September sent seeds (#1422) partly packed in earth and partly wrapped in oil paper, to the Arnold Arboretum.[12]

A good number of plants were raised and distributed amongst friends, the same precaution being taken with these as with other Magnolias, namely to send some to M. Leon Chenault. In distributing the plants, by some means or another the #838,[13] which belongs to *M. wilsonii* var. *nicholsoniana,* got attached to at least several consignments of *M. sinensis.* Naturally, this led to confusion, and I am much of the opinion that most of the plants growing in the British Isles under the name *M. nicholsoniana* are referable to *M. sinensis;* at least all that I have heard of, including those growing at Caerhays Castle, which flowered for the first time in 1928. By checking up the plants as they flower, noting especially the shape of the leaves and size of the blossoms, the unfortunate confusion can be straightened out.

There is one thing: Magnolias are famous garden plants and no one is likely to destroy a plant, no matter what name he may be growing it under. This species is as beautiful as any member of the group to which it belongs, and if in the final analysis it turns out to be identical with *M. globosa* there will be no cause for complaint, for this species, although known since 1849, has never yet been introduced into gardens, and moreover this Chinese plant, coming as it does from a northern region, is bound to prove hardier and consequently more amenable under cultivation.[14]

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11. *Magnolia sinensis* is treated by Spongberg as *Magnolia sieboldii* subsp. *sinensis* (Rehder & Wilson) Spongberg.

12. As Spongberg has noted, the Arnold Arboretum has five sheets of the type collections, Wilson 1422 (A), and the herbarium at Kew has three sheets. A lectotype needs to be selected.

13. In his field notebook Wilson had called his collection #1422 Magnolia *globosa* var. *sinensis* and referred to the seed lot as #838a. It is possible that some plants are still cultivated under that number.

14. Although grown out of doors in California and Washington, this taxon has not proven to be hardy on the east coast.