

A new magnolia introduction by the Brooklyn Botanic Garden

As a result of its intensive and successful magnolia breeding program carried out since 1953, the Brooklyn Botanic Garden has added a new magnolia hybrid to a collection of previously introduced cultivars. This purple flowering newcomer was named *Magnolia* x 'Marillyn', in honor of a friend and benefactor of the Garden. It was registered with the International Registrar of Magnolia Cultivars in March 1989.

The cultivars thus far introduced by the Garden are *Magnolia* x *brooklynensis* 'Evamaria', 1968 (type clone), *Magnolia* x 'Elizabeth', 1977, *Magnolia* x 'Yellow Bird', 1981 and *Magnolia* x 'Hattie Carthan', 1984.

Magnolia x 'Marillyn' is a hybrid between *M. liliiflora* 'Nigra' (section Tulipastrum) as seed parent and *M. kobus* (section Buergeria) as pollen parent. The cross of *M.* 'Marillyn' was made at BBG in 1954 by Evamaria Sperber. The resulting seedlings were later planted at the Garden's Research Center in Westchester County, NY, where the original tree of *M.* 'Marillyn' was labeled No. 149 in the 1.8 acre magnolia nursery. This tree is now 4-5 m (12-15') high with a multi-stemmed shrub-like growth habit.

The slightly fragrant flowers are red-purple on the outside (abaxial) surface and light purplish with dark veins originating from the base of the tepals on the inside (adaxial) surface. According to the Royal Horticultural

Society Color Chart, these colors correspond to 70A-C and 69B respectively. The flowers are upright tulip shaped, keeping a semi-open position almost to the end of the blooming period. The tepals are about 12 cm (5") long and 4-6 cm (2.5-3") wide; their number is mostly six. Stamens are purple. The tree is very floriferous, starting to bloom just before leaf expansion, continuing for about 4 weeks. Leaves are elliptic to obovate, 12-15 cm (5-7") long and 8-10 cm (3-4") wide. Juvenile leaves show a brownish-copper coloration.

The close resemblance of *M.* 'Marillyn' to *M. liliiflora* and also to the 'Kosar hybrids' (little girls) is undoubtedly evident. The differences are in growth habit and, most important, in the great hardiness that *M.* 'Marillyn' has shown over a long period of time and in various locations. It was tested in several areas, including Green Bay, Wisconsin (Zone 4b, USDA Chart) by Dennis Ledvina, and never showed any frost damage. This tree will be a perfect alternative to *Magnolia liliiflora* in colder regions.

Cytologically, *M.* 'Marillyn' is a triploid, with $2n(3x) = 57$ chromosomes. No seeds are produced. The preferred method of propagation is grafting. *Magnolia stellata* is an ideal understock. The young grafted trees usually bloom 2 years after planting. ■

*Introduction notice submitted by
Lola Koerting of the BBG.*



Magnolia *'Marilyn'*