



The **ARNOLD**
ARBORETUM
of HARVARD UNIVERSITY

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Magnolia kobus

(Kobus magnolia) Zones 4-7

Kobus magnolia is consistently one of the first magnolias to flower at the start of the season. This small tree puts on a spectacular display in early spring, when its velvety gray buds open to reveal 4"-wide, white, sweetly scented blooms, which completely envelop the tree. Even though Kobus magnolia may take over 10 years to flower, the unparalleled display is well worth the wait. Until then, its dark green summer foliage and silvery-gray bark provide ample flair. Fall brings striking fruits: rosy-red, cone-like follicles split open to showcase brilliant, shiny red seeds. Kobus magnolia makes a fine specimen or accent plant, growing approximately 20–25' in height with up to a 35' spread. Its pyramidal habit in youth matures to a more rounded form and is often multi-stemmed. It thrives in full sun and is adaptable to all soil types.

Three of the most noteworthy specimens at the Arnold Arboretum derived as seeds from a specimen collected in Hokkaido, Japan by Arboretum staff and plant explorers Steven Spongberg and Richard Weaver during the 1977 Korea and Japan Expedition. One of these trees grows in the magnolia collection near the Hunnewell Building and Arborway Gate, and the other two are standouts each spring along Willow Path.

Planting and Care Instructions

Carefully unpack your plant and choose a location that is partially shaded and protected from foot traffic and the potential for accidental breakage until you are ready to plant. Check it for watering needs daily, as containerized plants dry out quickly.

Plant in well-drained soil at the correct depth. The top of the root system should be level with the soil surface. The depth of the hole should accommodate the height of the roots and be left undisturbed to prevent settling, while the width of the hole should be at least two times the width of the root ball. This loosened soil will allow new roots to grow more quickly. After planting, water your shrub well and apply a 1-inch layer of mulch over the area, but do not allow mulch to contact the stem to reduce the likelihood of rot. Water again after mulching and continue to water (but not saturate) until established.