

## **Merrill Magnolia**

*(Magnolia x loebneri 'Merrill')*



In the early spring, the Merrill Magnolia (*Magnolia x loebneri 'Merrill'*) catches attention with its large, dramatic white flowers that blanket the entire tree.

The Magnolia family includes about 200 species of trees and shrubs found mostly in tropical regions. The *Magnolia x loebneri* species came about through the work of Max Loebner of Pillnitz, Germany, during the early 1900s. The cultivar at Winona State, 'Merrill,' originated at the Arnold Arboretum of Harvard University in 1939.

Magnolias, along with Ginkgos, are among the most ancient trees still in existence. Fossilized imprints of Magnolia leaves have been found which date back as far as the Cretaceous period.

The Magnolia flowers begin with large furry buds that open into broad and showy white flowers in mid to late April. When in full bloom, the Magnolia tree can resemble a puffy, white cloud.

Because it blooms so early in spring, the buds develop in the fall and then open into flowers in the spring before the leaves appear.

Though native to southern United States, the Magnolia can survive northern winters with care and can reach a height of 25-30 feet. Since the flower buds are marginally hardy, low temperatures can affect the bloom.