

Magnolia Care Guide for BC

HOW TO PLANT, GROW & CARE FOR MAGNOLIAS

Magnolias are stunning ornamental trees and shrubs known for their dramatic spring blooms, elegant structure, and timeless beauty. With the right placement and soil preparation, magnolias can be long-lived focal points in BC gardens.

Some varieties bloom in early spring before leaves emerge, while others flower later and may rebloom lightly in summer.

CHOOSING THE RIGHT MAGNOLIA

Different magnolia types perform differently depending on climate.

Deciduous Magnolias

(e.g., Saucer, Star, and Lily Magnolias)

- Large, showy spring blooms
- Bloom before leaves emerge
- Best for protected garden settings

Evergreen Magnolia

(e.g., Southern Magnolia – *Magnolia grandiflora*)

- Glossy evergreen leaves
- Large fragrant white flowers
- Best suited to mild coastal areas

Visit your local GARDENWORKS to select varieties suited to your region.

HOW TO PLANT MAGNOLIAS

Magnolias prefer minimal disturbance once established, so choosing the right location is important.

Sun Requirements

- Full sun to partial shade
- At least 4–6 hours of sun for best flowering (Evergreen magnolias require full sun)
- Protect from strong afternoon heat inland

Soil Requirements

Magnolias prefer:

- Rich, well-drained soil
- Slightly acidic to neutral pH
- High organic matter
- Amend soil with compost at planting. We recommend Sea Soil, Gardenworks Composted Mushroom Manure or Gardenworks Composted Cattle Manure
- Avoid compacted or waterlogged sites.

Planting Steps

1. Dig a hole twice as wide as the root ball.
2. Loosen surrounding soil to encourage root spread.
3. Plant at the same depth as in the container.
4. Backfill with amended soil.
5. Water thoroughly with Gardenworks| Transplanting Fertilizer 5-15-5 to encourage root development
6. Apply 2–3 inches of mulch (keep away from trunk).

Avoid planting too deeply — magnolias are sensitive to this.

WATERING MAGNOLIAS

- Water deeply during the first 1–2 growing seasons
- Keep soil consistently moist but not soggy
- Water during extended summer dry periods
- Mulch annually to retain moisture

Established magnolias are moderately drought tolerant in coastal BC but require more monitoring inland.

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FERTILIZING

- Apply compost in early spring
- Use a balanced slow-release fertilizer such as Gardenworks All Purpose Plant Food 6-8-6 if growth is weak
- Avoid heavy fertilization

Magnolias are not heavy feeders.

PRUNING MAGNOLIAS

Magnolias require very little pruning.

- Prune only to remove dead or crossing branches
- Best time to prune: late summer (after flowering and active growth slows)
- Avoid heavy pruning
- Magnolias do not respond well to aggressive shaping

GROWING MAGNOLIAS IN SOUTH COASTAL BC

South Coastal BC is one of the best regions in Canada for magnolias.

Why They Thrive

- Mild winters
- Moderate summer heat
- Higher humidity
- Longer growing season

Both deciduous and many evergreen magnolias perform well here.

Coastal Considerations

- Protect early blooms from late frost in exposed areas
- Ensure good drainage in clay soil
- Shelter from strong coastal winds

Evergreen magnolias are best suited to coastal gardens and may struggle inland.

GROWING MAGNOLIAS IN PENTICTON & THE OKANAGAN

Magnolias can grow in Penticton, but site selection is critical.

Climate Challenges

- Hot, dry summers
- Colder winter lows
- Rapid soil drying
- Greater temperature swings

Sun & Heat Protection

- Morning sun, afternoon shade is ideal
- Avoid reflected heat from walls or pavement
- Protect from strong summer winds

Heat stress is the biggest challenge inland.

Soil & Watering in Penticton

- Amend heavily with compost
- Improve moisture retention
- Water deeply and consistently
- Mulch generously to protect roots

Young magnolias need careful monitoring during summer heat waves.

Winter Considerations

- Choose cold-hardy varieties
- Avoid exposed, windy planting sites
- Mulch root zones before winter

****Evergreen magnolias are not recommended for our Penticton guests.**

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COMPANION PLANTS FOR MAGNOLIAS

Magnolias pair beautifully with woodland and layered plantings. Companion plants should tolerate similar soil and light conditions.

Shrub Companions

- Camellias (coastal areas)
- Hydrangeas
- Pieris
- Leucothoe

Perennial Companions

- Hellebores
- Hostas
- Heuchera
- Ferns (hardy and native varieties)
- Bergenia

Native & Ecosystem-Friendly Options

- Foamflower (Tiarella)
- Wild ginger (Asarum caudatum)

SEASONAL MAGNOLIA CARE CALENDAR (BC)

Shrub Companions

Early Spring

- Apply compost
- Monitor for frost damage

Late Spring

- Enjoy bloom
- Light structural pruning if needed

Summer

- Deep watering during dry periods
- Monitor for heat stress inland

Fall

- Maintain mulch
- Avoid fertilizing late in season

Winter

- Protect young trees from extreme cold inland

MAGNOLIA FAQs

Do magnolias grow well in BC?

Yes — especially in South Coastal BC where climate conditions are ideal.

Can magnolias grow in Penticton?

Yes, but choose hardy deciduous varieties and plant in protected locations with consistent watering. Evergreen varieties are not recommended for our Penticton guests.

Do magnolias need acidic soil?

They prefer slightly acidic to neutral soil but are adaptable with proper amendment.

When should I prune magnolias?

Prune lightly in late summer after flowering.