

MAGNOLIA

Magnoliaceae family

The magnolias includes one hundred species with nine species found in North America. They are an ancient lineage of trees, considered “primitive” by botanists. They can be small trees or shrubs. Unlike other plants with showy flowers of large and colorful petals backed by smaller, leaf-like sepals, magnolias’ two parts are not differentiated. The flower is composed of some numbers of “tepals” intermediate between petals and sepals. The magnolia flowers were pollinated mostly by beetles, given the relatively recent evolution of bees. Magnolia flowers are large and showy, white in most species, but pink in some Asian hybrids.

There is only one magnolia at Baber Cemetery. It is located inside the front gate on the west side of the entrance. It is a hybrid. Being more like a bush than a tree, it is short-trunked with spreading branches. It has large full rounded flowers with the petals pink on the outside and bright white on the inside. The flowers appear in early spring before the leaves. The leaves are small, slender with a point and shiny green in coloring. Its irregular fruit looks like a lumpy caterpillar.

