



## Virginia Tech Dendrology

**sweetbay magnolia** Magnoliaceae *Magnolia virginiana* L. symbol: MAV12

**Leaf:** Alternate, simple, narrow elliptical, 3 to 5 inches long, entire margin, evergreen to semi-evergreen in the south, shiny dark green above, silvery white below.

**Flower:** Species is monoecious; creamy white, 2 to 3 inches in diameter, 9 to 12 petals, mild lemony scent, appearing in late spring.

**Fruit:** Cone-like cluster of follicles, 2 inches long, pink to red ripening to reddish brown; bright scarlet-red seeds, ripen in late summer.

**Twig:** Moderate, pale green, pubescent, stipule scars circle twig; buds are long (1/2 inch) with fuzzy, silvery-gray scales that curl at their ends.

**Bark:** Smooth, reddish brown to gray, often mottled.

**Form:** A small tree typically not over 20 feet in height and multi-stemmed, grows taller in the south.

**Looks like:** loblolly bay - redbay - common sweetleaf



**Additional Range Information:** *Magnolia virginiana* is native to North America. Range may be expanded by planting. Download the full-size PDF map.

**More Information:** Fall Color - Landowner Factsheet

**External Links:** USDAFS Silvics of North America - USDAFS FEIS Silvics - USDA Plants Database - Horticulture

Information - USDAFS Forest Products Lab

All material 2021 Virginia Tech Dept. of Forest Resources and Environmental Conservation; Photos and text by: John Seiler, Edward Jensen, Alex Niemiera, and John Peterson; Silvics reprinted from Ag Handbook 654; range map source information

## Virginia Cooperative Extension

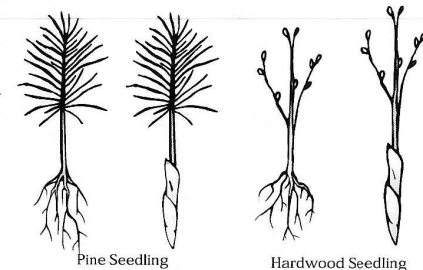
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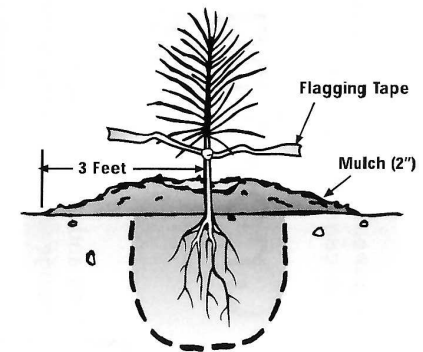
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## How to Plant and Care for a Seedling

**Step 1. Keep roots cool and moist until planting.**  
For individual seedlings, wrap the roots in a moist paper towel and insert them into a plastic bag (roots only). Store seedlings in an unheated basement or refrigerator. Do not let the roots freeze.



**Step 2. Find a spot with plenty of sun that is away from your house and not under electric or phone wires.** Clear all grass within three feet of the seedling. (Young trees do not like to grow in the grass.) Dig a hole slightly deeper than the roots so that they do not bend in the planting hole. Do not plant the seedling any deeper than the first green needles or bud.



**Step 3. Put some garden mulch, pine straw, or leaves in the three-foot area around the tree to keep grass from growing back.** Mark your tree with flagging or a small stake so that a lawn mower does not cut it. (Young trees are hard to see). Give your tree water when it gets hot and dry outside.

**Note:** Your seedling will grow slowly the first year. Do not plant seedlings closer than 10 feet from each other. The best time to plant a seedling is while it is still dormant and the ground is not frozen (February through April).