

Up-and-coming 'new' magnolias: a selection

As magnolia breeding continues apace around the world, collectors and enthusiasts struggle to keep up with so many new and unseen or untried varieties. This short article attempts to identify for Group members the currently little known potential stars of the future. Some are brand new but some have been around for quite a while in undeserved obscurity. This is not a further re-evaluation of the best newer yellow magnolias nor yet another accolade for *Magnolia* 'Black Tulip' or 'Genie'. Instead it is a joint and considered personal view on what are likely to become the popular and commercial success stories in the magnolia world in the next decade. It will be interesting and amusing to see how accurate or otherwise our predictions become, especially since we are all obviously a little biased in favour of our own introductions!

Our list is deliberately in alphabetical order, deliberately varied and includes selections for smaller gardens as well as woodland settings.



MAGNOLIA 'AURORA'

JIM GARDINER



MAGNOLIA 'CAERHAYS SPLENDOUR' CAERHAYS ESTATE

Magnolia 'Aurora' (*Magnolia sargentiana* var. *robusta* × *Magnolia* 'Star Wars')

A wonderful hybrid of 'Star Wars' which was raised by Oz Blumhardt with an upright habit, flowering at a young age and early in the season. Deep magenta flowers fading to clear pink.

Magnolia 'Caerhays Splendour'

This is a deliberate three-way species cross between *Magnolia sargentiana* var. *robusta* × *Magnolia campbellii* ssp. *mollicomata* 'Lanarth' × *Magnolia campbellii* 'Darjeeling' made by Jaimie Parsons at Caerhays, which first flowered in 2011. It bears the attributes of all three of its parents, flowers mid-season and is a unique colour. Five seedlings were raised from the original cross and all have now flowered. Fortunately, the best of the five has ended up in the prime location and was formally registered in 2014.

Magnolia 'Daybreak' (*Magnolia* × *brooklynensis* 'Woodsman' × *Magnolia* 'Tina Durio')

An August Kehr hybrid registered in 1991 but only now appearing more widely in the UK. An elegant, upright, small tree with the most distinctive pink-coloured flowers that are extremely fragrant and appear late in the season, in mid-April.

THE DISTINCTIVE OPENING BUD AND BLOOM OF *MAGNOLIA* 'DAYBREAK'

CAERHAYS ESTATE

***Magnolia* 'F J Williams'** (*Magnolia sargentiana* var. *robusta* × *Magnolia campbellii* ssp. *mollicomata* 'Lanarth')

This seedling, raised by Philip Tregunna at Caerhays, was planted in 1987 and first flowered in 1999. It flowers very early, in February or early March but its flowers are much larger and, at first, a magenta red, rather than the smaller cyclamen-purple flowers of 'Lanarth'. Fairly slow growing, with a triangular habit, it was formally registered in 2009 and is now starting to become more widely available.

*MAGNOLIA* 'F J WILLIAMS'

CAERHAYS ESTATE

***Magnolia* 'Janet'** (*Magnolia* 'Pegasus' × *Magnolia campbellii* 'Darjeeling')

A hand cross made at Verwood (the garden of John Gallagher) which was a prime attraction at the early Rosemoor show in March 2014. The delicate mixture of white outer tepals blushed pink, and central pink tepals makes one stop and think how different this variety is to, say, *Magnolia* 'Caerhays Belle'. A round headed tree with eight inch flowers appearing early to mid-season and surprisingly frost-hardy.

***Magnolia* × *soulangeana* 'Just Jean'**

A chance seedling from Verwood with very large goblet-shaped flowers. The outer tepals are flushed with a rich pink, darkening towards the base, which makes it so unusual. Very free flowering and a great advance in *Magnolia* × *soulangeana* hybrids.

***Magnolia* 'Kim Kunso'** (*Magnolia* × *soulangeana* 'Lennei' × *Magnolia* × *veitchii* 'Peter Veitch')

A later-flowering Gresham hybrid, named at Ken Durio's nursery in the US quite some time ago, which has only just made it to the UK. It has spectacular cup-shaped flowers with deep magenta tepals on the outside and white inside. Even better than the recent New Zealand introduction, *Magnolia* 'Old Port', which has a similar colour mix but does not open so fully and is still relatively untested in the northern hemisphere.

UP-AND-COMING 'NEW' MAGNOLIAS



(TOP LEFT) *MAGNOLIA* 'JANET'; (TOP RIGHT) *MAGNOLIA* X *SOULANGEANA* 'JUST JEAN'
(BOTTOM LEFT) *MAGNOLIA* 'KIM KUNSO'; (BOTTOM RIGHT) *MAGNOLIA* 'LEMON STAR'

KEVIN HUGHES/JOHN GALLAGHER/SEVE NANTES/CAERHAYS ESTATE

Magnolia 'Lemon Star' (syn. 'Swedish Star')
(*Magnolia acuminata* × *Magnolia kobus* 'Norman Gould')

This August Kehr hybrid flowered for the first time and was selected at Arboretum Wespelaar in Belgium in 2000. The flowers are greenish-yellow at first with their six tepals opening flat to reveal creamy-white insides. The flowers appear before or with the leaves in mid to late April and normally last for well over a month. Stunningly different and justly described as 'lemon ice cream'. Its first time flowering at Caerhays in 2015, only four years after planting and already eight feet in height, was a revelation.

Magnolia × loebneri 'Mag's Pirouette'

This is a Japanese form selected by Tetsuo Magaki. It has been around in the UK for 20 or so years but is only now coming to be appreciated properly for its unique 'rose-like' flowers. Cream or pink-tinged buds open to perfectly symmetrical white flowers tinged pink at the base. If you only have room for one magnolia, this will not disappoint and will be far more rewarding than any *Magnolia stellata*. All three of us put this on our 'strongly recommended' lists.

Magnolia 'Peter Dummer' (*Magnolia campbellii* 'Darjeeling' × *Magnolia* 'Pegasus')

A cross made by Peter Dummer, propagator and hybridist at Hillier Nurseries, by transferring pollen from 'Darjeeling' onto 'Pegasus' in the mid-1980s using trees in the Hillier Arboretum. Named in Peter Dummer's honour by Jim Gardiner after having it seen in flower over several years. A small-to-medium sized tree with most distinctive pink flowers, creamy white on the inside and becoming darker at the base.

Magnolia pseudokobus 'Kubishimodoki'

Described by Jim Gardiner as the best new 'must have' magnolia at Wisley a few years ago, this fairly slow-growing magnolia has pure white flowers which open perfectly flat to the stem and then turn sideways or downwards. It has a hint of pink at the base when full out. (See image page 4)

Magnolia 'Raspberry Fun'

This is a *M. × loebneri* 'Leonard Messel' seedling raised at the Chollipo Arboretum in South Korea and selected by Carl Ferris Miller in 1987. At Caerhays we rated it as the best new first time flowering magnolia (with us) for 2015. Deep pink at first, it fades to a lighter pink but with a deep pink stripe on the outside of the tepals. More attractive



(TOP) *MAGNOLIA* × *LOEBNERI* 'MAG'S PIROUETTE'
(BOTTOM) *MAGNOLIA* 'PETER DUMMER' AT WISLEY

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(TOP LEFT) MAGNOLIA 'PETER DUMMER'; (TOP RIGHT) MAGNOLIA 'RASPBERRY FUN'
(BOTTOM) MAGNOLIA 'YUCHELIA'

JIM GARDINER/CAERHAYS ESTATE/CAERHAYS ESTATE



(TOP) MAGNOLIA 'SWEET SIXTEEN'
(BOTTOM) MAGNOLIA 'SPRING RITE'

CAERHAYS ESTATE/KEVIN HUGHES

and darker in colour than the weak pinkish *Magnolia stellata* varieties and likely to be very popular in urban gardens or even in a large tub. **Magnolia 'Spring Rite'** (*Magnolia* × *soulangeana* 'Lennei Alba' × *Magnolia* × *veitchii*)

Deservedly rising in the popularity charts, this Gresham hybrid has huge cup-shaped silvery white flowers with a hint of rose at the base. It flowers in February or early March and is fast growing.

Magnolia 'Sweet Sixteen' (*Magnolia* × *soulangeana* 'Lennei' × *Magnolia* × *veitchii*)

This Gresham hybrid, planted at Caerhays in 1991, is still a small plant but, over time, it has developed to produce an abundance of enormous white elliptic buds each year which remain erect and upright even when open. In the last five years this plant has produced everything needed to be stunning in a small garden.

Magnolia 'Yuchelia' (*Magnolia acuminata* 'Miss Honeybee' × *Magnolia figo*)

One of the very first crosses between a magnolia and a michelia. Although deciduous, the bark formation and exquisite scent that this plant has, confirms its part michelia parentage even from a fair distance. The flowers have been said to resemble the now popular *Magnolia* 'Daybreak' but, although the colour mix of the outer tepals may initially be similar, *Magnolia* 'Yuchelia's tepals quickly droop 180° to show the creamy white michelia-like insides.

We very much hope that Group members will enjoy, and indeed disagree with, our selection!

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gardens in Dorset and was a long serving member of the RHS Woody Plant Committee

All three are renowned experts on magnolias