

*Magnolia macrophylla*

[Synonyms : *Magnolia auriculata*, *Magnolia michauxiana*]

**BIGLEAF MAGNOLIA** is a deciduous tree. Native to south-eastern North America it has large, sweetly fragrant, often purple-centred, creamy-white flowers with many stamens. It is also known as Big bloom, Big leaf, Bull bay, Cowcumber, Cowcumber magnolia, Cucumber, Cucumber tree, Elk bark, Elkwood, Great-leaved magnolia, Great magnolia, Itomico, Large-flowered magnolia, Large-leaf magnolia, Large-leaved cucumber tree, Large-leaved magnolia, Large leaved umbrella tree, Laurel, Longleaf cucumber, Long-leaved magnolia, Mountain magnolia, Pyramid magnolia, Royal-oread, Silverleaf, Silverleaf magnolia, Southern cucumbertree, Southern magnolia, Umbrella tree, White cucumbertree, and Whitebay beaver tree.

The flowers are pollinated by beetles.

The branches are brittle and thus susceptible to storm damage. The flowers bruise easily and then turn brown if they are even touched by their own twigs or leaves – and the wind can tear the leaves to ribbons with great ease.

Warning – some authorities note that bark and leaves may cause skin irritation and the wood may induce bronchitis.

*Macrophylla* is made up of Greek *macro*- (large, long) and *phyllo*- (leaf) components meaning 'large-leaved'.

The North American Cherokee Indians used the wood for making furniture, and for construction and wood pulp (paper).

Records also show that the plant offered the Cherokee tribe medicine to treat diarrhoea, indigestion, stomach disorders and sinus problems – and they also used it to ease toothache.

Although not used today commercially, in the past the wood has offered material for flooring and furniture.

The tree is cultivated as an ornamental.

Medicinally, the bark has been used by local herbalists to treat fever and rheumatism.