Marvelous magnolias to spring forth in Delaware

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Several species of marvellously large-flowered magnolia trees can be grown in Delaware. One of these, sweetbay magnolia, is a Delaware native.

Sweetbay magnolia (Magnolia virginiana) grows naturally along streams and swamps in Delaware, and is a very attractive small tree to plant! The fragrant white/creamy-white flowers typically open in June, and the leaves are nearly evergreen. It grows to 20-30 feet tall, and it prefers moist soil and partial shade to full sun. Its range extends along the coastal plain and piedmont of the eastern U.S. from New Jersey south to Florida.

The commonly planted southern magnolia (Magnolia grandiflora) is a tall tree, with large white flowers. It’s easy to recognize with its big evergreen leaves that are glossy green above and often brownish-hairy beneath. Its natural range is in the southeastern coastal plain, as far north as southeastern Virginia, so it’s not native to Delaware. The southern magnolia outside our house in Dover is just starting to bloom right now, and I’m looking forward to seeing and smelling the blossoms!

The other tall magnolia tree is cucum-