

Magnolia sprengeri and Magnolia biondii clones for the RHS 2012

Erland Ejder 29 December 2013.

This document is to be archived by the RHS for future information about the Magnolia clones described. It may be freely copied and distributed to anybody interested.

During a period from 2008 to 2010, a field research project about *Magnolia sprengeri* (and to some extent *M. biondii*) in central China, initiated by dr Erland Ejder, Sweden, was pursued together with prof. Kang Yongxiang of the Agriculture and Forestry University in Yangling, Shaanxi, China.

The project details and results have been published in the articles listed below.

One aim has been to introduce clones of these magnolias into cultivation and both graftwood and seeds have been harvested whenever possible. It has been deemed valuable to secure the continued cultivation of a selection of the clones by the RHS. Budsticks of plants now growing in Sweden (chip buddings by Erland Ejder of the original collections) were sent for propagation to John Ravenscroft, The Old Rectory, Hodnet, Shropshire, UK – on behalf of the RHS in August 2012. In December 2013 the clones listed below are reported to have been successfully propagated and established in pots.

The material is intended for RHS Wisley, in accordance with an agreement with Jim Gardiner, Director of Horticulture of RHS (now Executive Vice President). After these clones have been established at Wisley (or some other garden of the RHS) there are no restrictions for further dissemination to any garden.

Plant documentation may be boring in the making but very often greatly appreciated later. Below is the documentation of the 10 clones successfully propagated.

Important: The clones have no collection numbers but instead unique clone names given during the field collection. It is highly important that these names are retained for further reference and always closely connected to the plants wherever they are cultivated, by the RHS or elsewhere. They have not been officially registered yet, we will probably register a few later - after further evaluation - but in any case all these clones must always keep their names.

If surplus plants are forwarded to other growers by the RHS it is highly desirable that plants are accompanied by this documentation.

References:

Kang YX, Ejder E, Wang YL, Sjöman H, Yang M. 2008. *Magnolia sprengeri* 'Diva' and its relatives in China. *The Plantsman* 7: 212-217

Kang YX, Ejder E. 2011. *Magnolia sprengeri* Pamp.: Morphological variation and geographical distribution. *Plant Biosystems* 145: 906-923. [Main reference]

Ejder E. 2013. *Magnolia sprengeri* in China. *Magnolia* 48: 1-14

Wang, Y.L.; Ejder, E.; Yang, J.F.; Kang, Y.X.; Ye, W.; Zhang, S.Z. 2013. New varieties of *Magnolia biondii* and *Magnolia cylindrica* (Magnoliaceae) in China. *Blumea* 58: 33-38

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There are of course lots of additional details, not mentioned in this documentation, but still possibly of interest.

1. *Magnolia sprengeri* var. *diva* 'Pink Floyd'
2. *M. sprengeri* var. *sprengeri* 'Cutie'
3. *M. sprengeri* var. *diva* 'Dusty Pink'
4. *M. sprengeri* var. *sprengeri* 'Watercolour'
5. *M. sprengeri* var. *sprengeri* 'Pink Methuselah'
6. *M. sprengeri* var. *sprengeri* 'Top Drawer'
7. *M. sprengeri* var. *sprengeri* 'Monkey Business'
8. *M. sprengeri* var. *diva* 'Village Beauty'
9. *M. sprengeri* var. *diva* 'High Haven'
10. *M. biondii* var. *purpurascens* 'Purple Base'

There are a few (3-4) more clones, mainly collected in 2010, which should be added to this collection. If this is done (in a couple of years), the additional documentation should be added to and kept together with this document.

1. *Magnolia sprengeri* var. *diva* 'Pink Floyd'

SW Hubei, not far from the Hunan border, in "Magnolia Valley". 30 09 30.3 110 46 11.9
1043 m. 27 March 2008 (revisited in autumn).

15 cm dbh, 11 m high.

In full flower, tepals deep pink both adaxially and abaxially. Very attractive flower.

Name: Refers to the well-known English rock band and to the deep pink flower.



2. *Magnolia sprengeri* var. *sprengeri* 'Cutie'

SW Shaanxi, NE slope of Zobo Mt. East of Forest Farm called "The place where the Phoenix bird rests on its flight over the mountains". Forest Farm director and Erland Ejder in photo below. 33 42 39.1 106 46 10.1 1452 m. 29 March 2008 (revisited in autumn).

16 cm dbh, 11 m high.

Pale pink flower but still of the var. *sprengeri*.

Name: A very cute flower of a soft pale pink, a true "Cutie"



3. *Magnolia sprengeri* var. *diva* 'Dusty Pink'

SW Hubei, very close to Hunan border. 30 08 02.8 110 49 37.3 1359 m. Close to a small mountain road leading up to the Hunan border. 27 March 2008 (revisited in autumn). Growing with *Sassafras tzumu*.

Rather young tree, about 7 m high, but floriferous.
Tepals deep pink abaxially and adaxially, long. Very fine form.

Name: We walked up a very small mountain road when we were surprised to meet a small, compact lorry carrying coarsely crushed iron ore from the other side of the mountain ridge – and we were covered by dust raised by the lorry. In the autumn when we returned, the enterprise had been given up – seems a wise decision – and the little road or track had started to grow over.

There is also an allusion to the well known pop singer Dusty Springfield.

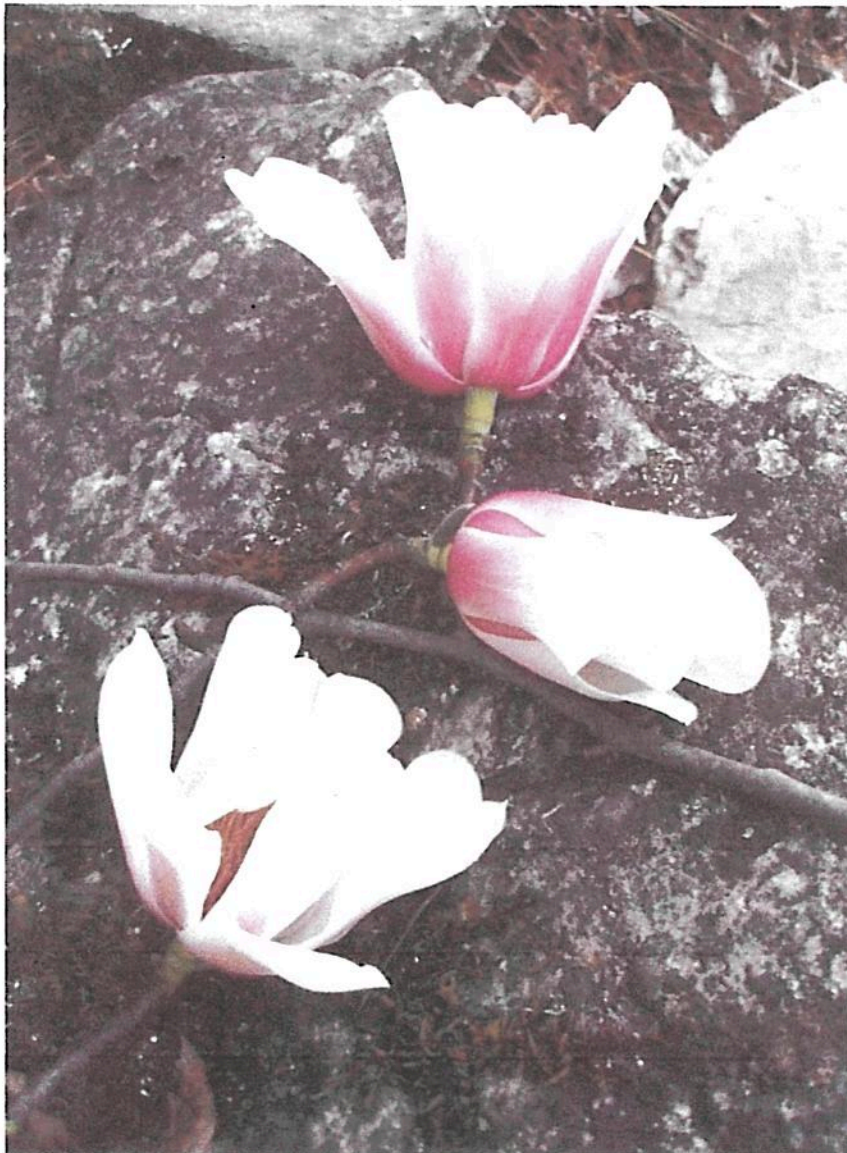


4. *Magnolia sprengeri* var. *sprengeri* 'Watercolour'

S Shaanxi, south slope of Qinling Mts, Caiziping. 33 39 08.1 108 17 58.3 1355 m, 1 April 2008.

17 cm dbh, 7 m high. Branches and buds obviously harvested in earlier years. In full flower. 12 tepals, white with pink colouring abaxially.

Name: The colour is basically white but with a soft pink colouring on the lower outside of the tepals – giving the impression of watercolours/aquarelle

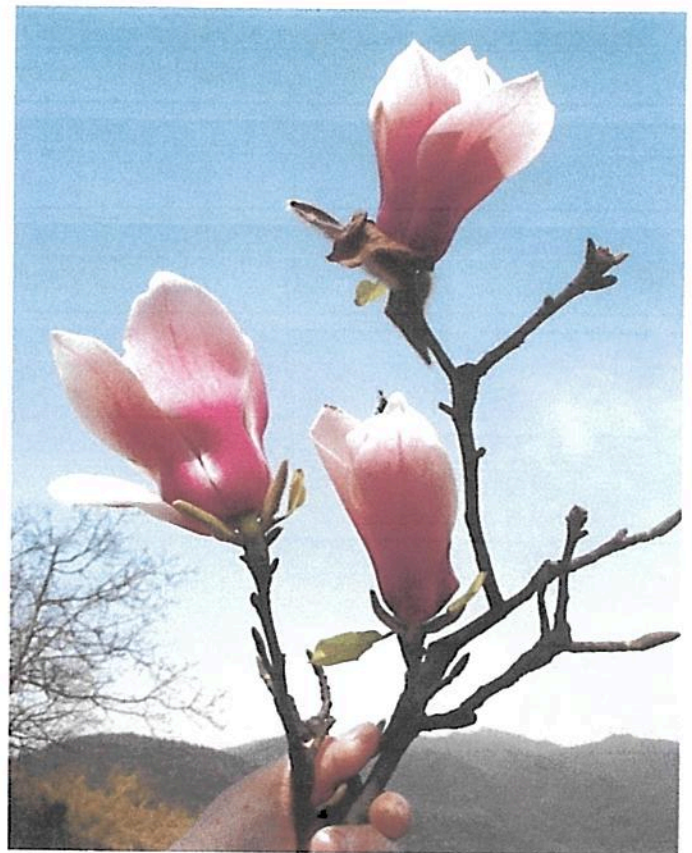


5. *Magnolia sprengeri* var. *sprengeri* 'Pink Methuselah'

S Shaanxi, north slope of Qinling Mts. 34 03 09.0 107 36 40.8 1194 m. 30 March 2008.

Big, very old tree, like a giant shrub, stem partly rotten and broken up, measurements very difficult. Buddhist insignia on west side of the stem: red ribbon and piece of board. In full flower. 10-12 tepals, white with rather strong purple colouring abaxially, still to be referred to var. *sprengeri*.

Name: A very old and venerable tree, big, leaning out over a steep slope giving the seed and graftwood climber (Erland Ejder) a fright that the whole thing might break and fall over. Methuselah was the oldest person in the Bible, attaining the age of 969 years. Often as "old as Methuselah", used to refer to any living thing reaching great age.



6. *Magnolia sprengeri* var. *sprengeri* 'Top Drawer'

S Shaanxi, high up on the south slope of the Qinling Mts. 33 44 24.6 108 20 19.6 1783 m.
1 April 2008.

39 cm dbh, 15 m high.

Flowers not yet opened at this altitude but dissection of bud shows white flower.

Name: This was the highest elevation for a *M sprengeri* we found on the south slope of Qinling Mts. Also, here as a joke, "Top drawer" as in "(not quite) out of the top drawer" which refers to best (or lack of) quality and highest social standing.

7. *Magnolia sprengeri* var. *sprengeri* 'Monkey Business'

S Shaanxi, south slope of Qinling Mts. Caiziping. 33 44 25.3 108 19 31.6 1618 m. 1 April 2008.

3 stems, biggest one 35 cm dbh, 20 m high. Flowers not seen (a few left at the top, not possible to reach, many buds destroyed, see comment below!) but very probably white.

Name: "Monkey Business" means something not quite legal and straightforward. For example there is a film "Monkey Business" with the Marx Brothers.

The second meaning is that the flower buds of this tree were very much eaten by some animal with lots of remains on the ground below. Our very local guide said the most likely perpetrators were Qinling golden snub-nosed monkeys, *Rhinopithecus roxellana qinlingensis*. They are rare and endangered, very climate hardy but living in this area in small flocks. We were a bit doubtful but later one person of our party actually saw one of those beasts at a distance so the conclusion seems rather likely.

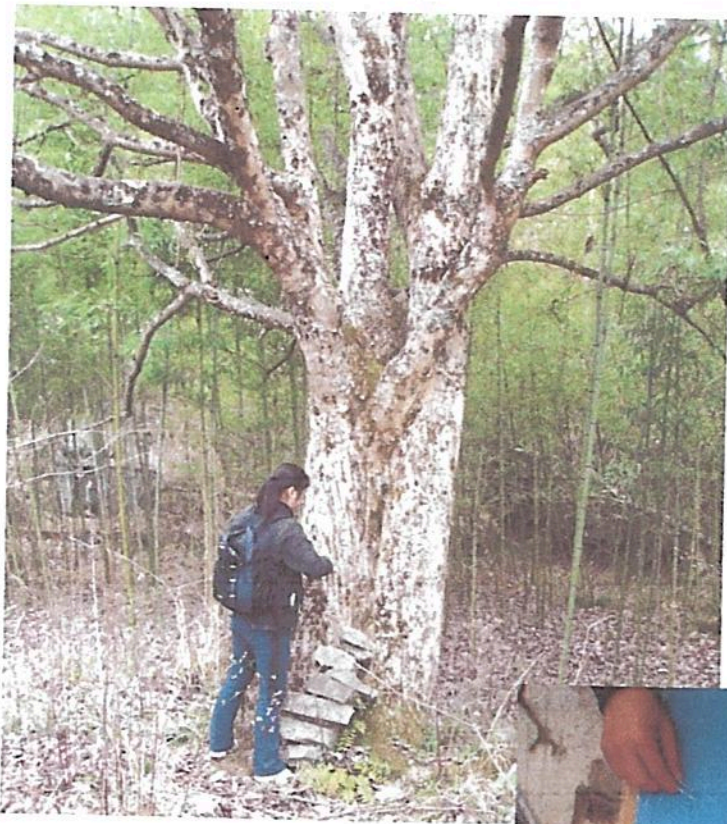


8. *Magnolia sprengeri* var. *diva* 'Village Beauty'

E Chongqing (formerly Sichuan), Xinlong, very close to the Hubei border, S of Yangtze River. 30 36 55.9 109 21 27.6 1446 m. 22 March 2010.

Big, mature tree (see photo below). Flowers pink, lighter adaxially, About 15 tepals, broad. Very fine flower. Flaking bark.

Name: The tree is growing at a very small village. It has, according to some villagers we interviewed, been moved as a sapling from a nearby mountainside and their pride in this magnificent tree was evident. Also refers to "The Village Beauty", a poem by Robert Gemmell 1886.



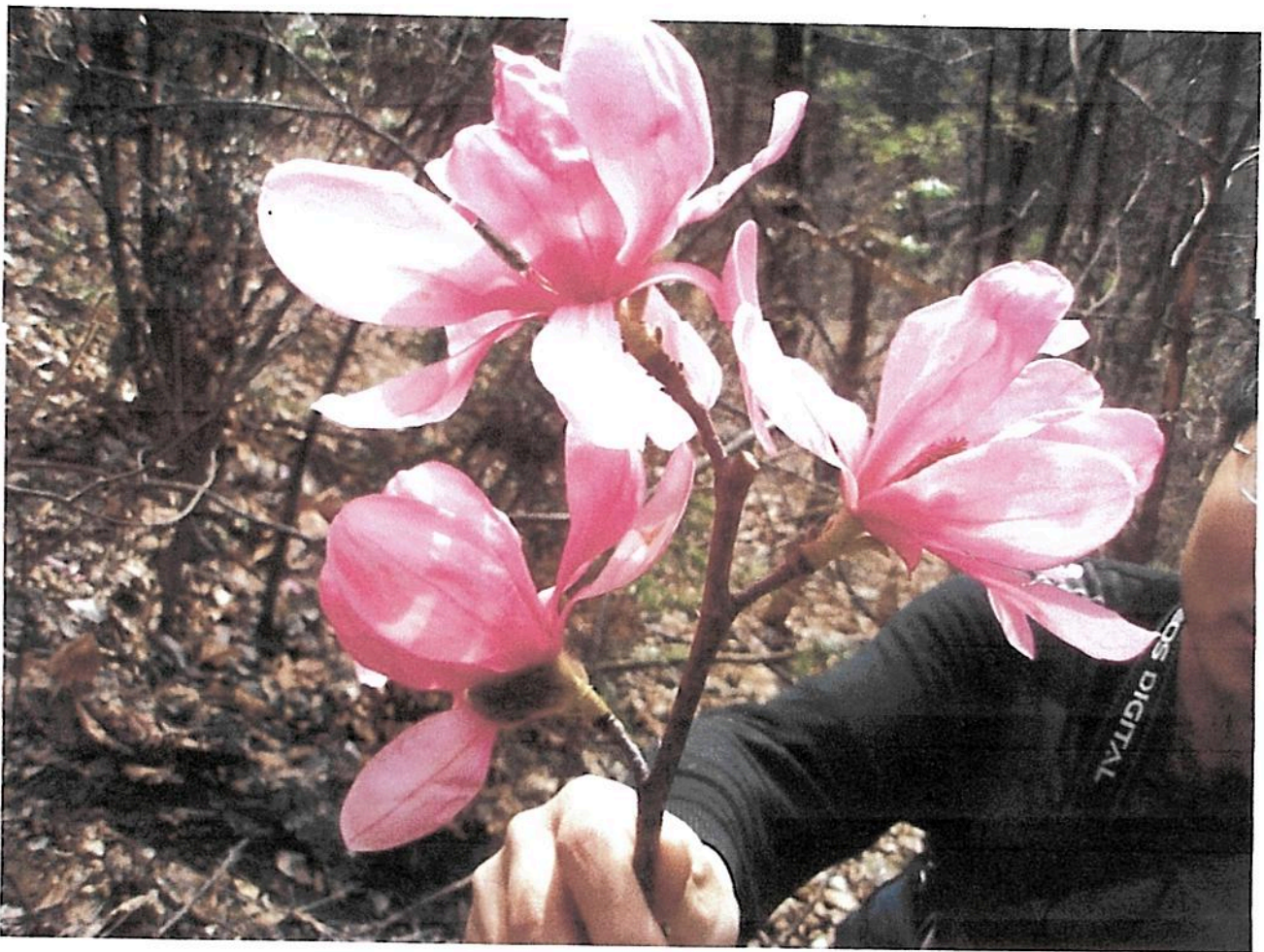
9. *Magnolia sprengeri* var. *diva* 'High Haven'

SW Hubei, very close to Hunan border. 30 07 57.8 110 49 32.4 1478 m. 27 March 2008 (revisited in autumn).

Double stem 36 cm dbh + 10 cm dbh, 12 m high. Flowers deep pink both adaxially and abaxially, 11-16 tepals. Very fine form.

Name: We could see this tree high up and far away on a mountainside and walked a long and arduous way up to it. "High Haven" means "lofty refuge".

It is the name of the residence of the British Secret Service near the top of The Peak, Hong Kong's Olympus – as told by John le Carré in "The Honourable Schoolboy".



10. *Magnolia biondii* var. *purpurascens* 'Purple Base'

SE Shaanxi, E of Ningshan. 33°18'56.8" 108°29'10.6" 1294 m. 23 March 2008 (revisited autumn).

Rather young tree (a few more in the vicinity), double stem dbh 12 cm + 8 cm., height about 8 m. Flowering almost over. 6 petaloid and 3 sepaloid tepals.

This new variety is described in: New varieties of Magnolia biondii and Magnolia cylindrica (Magnoliaceae) in China. Wang, Y.L.; Ejder, E.; Yang, J.F.; Kang, F.X.; Fe, W.; Zhang, S.Z. *Blumea* Volume 58, Number 1, September 2013, pp. 33-38

Name: The lower outside of the tepals has a deep purple colour – as typical of *M. biondii* var. *purpurascens*.

"Purple Sound" is also a concept in electronic music.

