

ASHE'S MAGNOLIA

Magnolia ashei Weatherby

Synonyms: *Magnolia macrophylla* Michx. ssp. *ashei* (Weatherby) Spongberg

Family: Magnoliaceae (magnolia)

FNAI Ranks: G3/S3

Legal Status: US-none FL-Endangered

Wetland Status: US-FACU*+ FL-UPL



Large leaves up to 24 in. long and glaucous beneath; leaf base auriculate to cordate with pubescent buds and twigs. Photo taken at Joe Budd WMA by Kelly Anderson.

Field Description: Small **tree or large shrub**, 15 - 30 feet tall, usually with several leaning, gray-barked trunks. **Twigs** stout with conspicuous **stipule scars** encircling stem and large, shield-shaped **leaf scars**. **Leaves** 1 - 2 feet long (largest simple leaves of any FL tree), alternate, deciduous, broadly oval, wider above the middle, with "eared" base; upper surface green, lower surface shaggy on young leaves and chalky-white on mature leaves. **Flowers** 1 foot across, fragrant, petals white with large, purple splotch. **Fruit** cone-like, 2 inches long, red maturing to brown, with red seeds held in small, open pockets.

Similar Species: Three deciduous, single-trunked species of magnolia occur in the rich, hardwood forests of Panhandle slopes and ravines: pyramid magnolia (*M.*

pyramidata) with diamond-shaped leaves, eared leaf bases, and fragrant white flowers; cucumbertree (*M. acuminata*), with tapering leaf bases and small, yellowish-green flowers; and umbrellatree (*M. tripetala*) with tapering leaf bases and large, all-white flowers.

Related Rare Species: Pyramid magnolia (*M. pyramidata*), cucumbertree (*M. acuminata*), and umbrellatree (*M. tripetala*) are state-endangered.

Habitat: Rich upland hardwood forests of slopes, bluffs, and floodplains.

Best Survey Season: Spring; April. Multiple trunks, stout twigs, and large fallen leaves, which look like old paper bags on the ground, are distinctive in the winter.

Range-wide Distribution: Ashe's magnolia is endemic to the FL Panhandle. The other rare magnolias are more northern species that reach their southern limit in N FL.

Conservation Status: About half of the 90+ occurrences of Ashe's magnolia are protected on five conservation areas. The other magnolias are very rare and are not protected on conservation areas in FL.

Protection and Management: Avoid logging, clearing, or burning slope forests and floodplains.

References: Coile 2000, Godfrey 1988, Kral 1983, Nelson 1994, Nelson 1996, Ward 1979, Wunderlin and Hansen 2011, Wunderlin et al. 2018.



Flowers are large, fragrant, mostly white with a pink center. Photo taken at Joe Budd WMA by Kelly Anderson.



Large leaves up to 24 in. long and glaucous beneath; leaf base auriculate to cordate with pubescent buds and twigs. Photo taken at Joe Budd WMA by Kelly Anderson.



Growing on upper slope of upland hardwood forest. Photo taken at Joe Budd WMA by Kelly Anderson