ASHE’S MAGNOLIA
Magnolia ashei Weatherby

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

Family: Magnoliaceae (magnolia)

FNAI Ranks: G3/S2

Legal Status: US-none FL-Endangered

Wetland Status: US-FACU* FL-none

Field Description: Small tree or large shrub, 15 - 3 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.
Ashe’s magnolia  

*Magnolia ashei*

**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:** Flowers in 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 9+ 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.

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