SOUTHERN EVERGREEN MAGNOLIA CARE

LIGHT

Southern magnolia (Magnolia grandiflora), including Alta, Little Gem, and Bracken's Brown Beauty, grows in sun to partial shade. Give it room for its mature evergreen canopy. Choose a position sheltered from cold, drying winds and check the cultivar's hardiness against your specific site.

WATER

Water slowly and deeply after planting, then check both the root ball and surrounding soil before watering again. Keep roots evenly moist while the plant establishes. A new tree needs regular checks in dry or windy weather even when nearby established plants look comfortable.

SOIL & PLANTING

Use moist, well-drained, reasonably fertile soil. Keep the root flare visible and avoid prolonged flooding or a waterlogged winter site. Mulch over the roots without burying the trunk. Leave the root area undisturbed rather than repeatedly digging or trying to maintain dense lawn beneath low branches.

FEEDING

Use a soil test to guide fertilizer and any pH amendments. Do not add lime automatically or push a healthy plant with heavy nitrogen. If feeding is needed, apply a modest spring dose of woody-plant fertilizer at the label rate, keeping it away from the trunk.

SEASONAL CARE

Preserve the natural framework and lower foliage where space allows. Little regular pruning is needed. Make only small corrective cuts, removing damaged or misplaced branches; seek skilled help for major limbs. Avoid topping, drastic size reduction, and late-season clipping that encourages tender new growth.

HELPFUL TIPS

Glossy leaves, brown leaf undersides, and periodic shedding of older leaves are normal. Cold tolerance varies: a hardier selection is not automatically suitable for every Maine garden. These are evergreen southern magnolias, with different winter needs from hardy deciduous star and saucer magnolias.