

A Magnolia Walk

by ALICE CALLAWAY

It was a great pleasure to me to have the members of the Board of The Magnolia Society visit our garden on a chilly morning October 27, 1990. I appreciated their braving the cold to come, and I hope no one was sick afterward.

I have been a member of The Magnolia Society since 1964 and have so often wished that interested members could see the 100 year old grandifloras growing in our garden. They were planted by Sara Coleman Ferrell when she started planning the garden in 1841. There are still 24 left growing among the boxwood beds; others have been removed due to poor health or a crowded condition. During the Civil War Mrs. Ferrell planted an avenue of them along the main walk (some from seeds), and named it Magnolia Walk.

They were spaced approximately 25 feet apart. This is recorded in the archives at Montgomery, Alabama, in a paper, "Beautiful Homes of LaGrange," written in 1887. The largest has a circumference of nine feet, and is 90 feet tall. Their roots keep the soil under them very dry and nothing grows well under their shade except the boxwoods and ground covers of *Vinca*, *Ajuga*, and Mondo Grass. The lowest limbs have been removed to give some light to the plants beneath them. Walking beneath them reminds one of the

vaulted ceiling of a cathedral.

They bloom profusely, and their fragrance perfumes the entire garden. At the same time as they bloom, the leaves begin to shed and there is constant cleanup necessary. It is unusual to have them growing in a formal boxwood garden, but the combination is beautiful. As I write this on a cold January day, the magnolias glisten in the sunlight and the boxwoods shine, making a lovely picture out of the window. There are *Jasmine nudiflorum* in bloom; paper white narcissus and camellias. It makes me very thankful to live in the South where the winter scene rivals all three of the other seasons in interest.

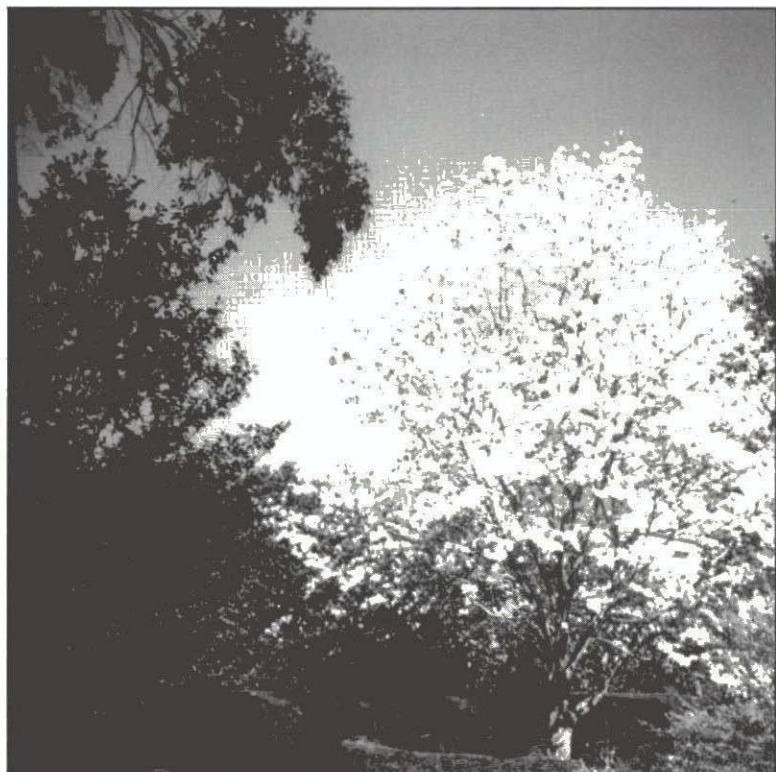
If any members of the society are ever traveling in our area, I would welcome the opportunity to show them my pride and joy. 🌸

Mrs. Callaway gardens at LaGrange, Georgia, only a short drive from the famous Callaway Gardens at Pine Mountain. In addition to the century old specimens of M. grandiflora mentioned in the above article, Mrs. Callaway has a growing collection of the other natives species plus a number of large specimens of various exotic magnolias. I would like to thank Mrs. Callaway for her hospitality and for sharing her garden.



Above: One of the Magnolia grandiflora planted during the Civil War as part of Magnolia Walk.

Right: A large specimen of Magnolia denudata growing in the midst of the boxwood garden.





The Magnolia Walk looking toward the entrance gates.