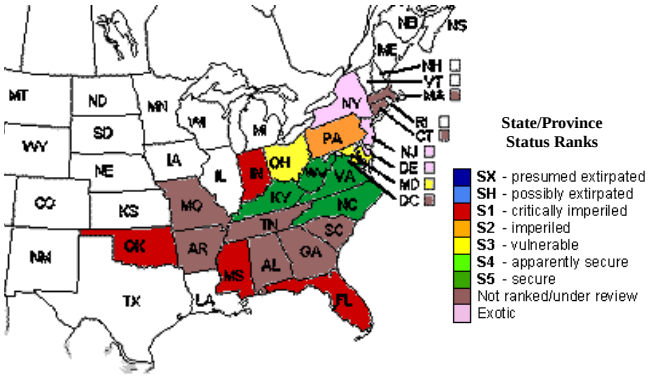
Umbrella Magnolia
Magnolia tripetala

Description
Umbrella magnolia is a small deciduous tree that often has several trunks and grows up to 33 feet (10 meters) tall. The leaves are alternate, untoothed on the margin, conspicuously large (to 24 inches, or 60 cm long), oval to oblong in shape, and usually clustered at the ends of the stout branchlets. The flowers, appearing in May, have large, showy, white petals that are up to 5½ inches (14 cm) long. The fruits are aggregated in a 3 to 5 inch (7-12 cm) cone-like structure, with the enclosed seeds having an orange or red outer covering.

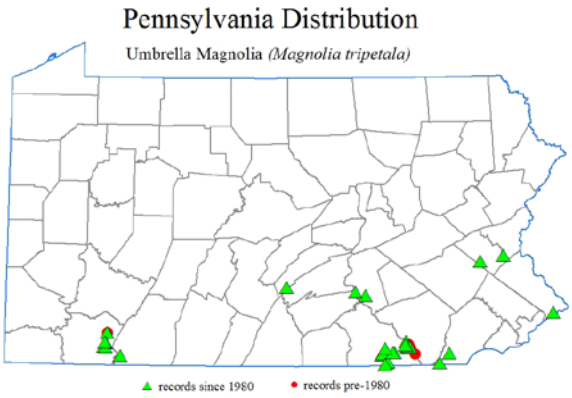
Photo Source: PNHP

Distribution & Habitat
Umbrella magnolia has a range from Pennsylvania west and south into Oklahoma and the Gulf Coast states. In Pennsylvania, it reaches a northern border of its natural range, and has been documented in several southern counties. It grows on rich wooded slopes, wooded streambanks, and in moist ravines. The species has also been cultivated in locations (e.g., the Philadelphia area) that are believed to be outside its natural range in the state, and has escaped from these plantings to woodlands.

North American State/Province Conservation Status
Map by NatureServe 2014



Current State Status
The PA Biological Survey (PABS) considers umbrella magnolia to be a species of special concern, based on the few occurrences that have been recently confirmed. It has a PA legal rarity status of Threatened and a PABS suggested rarity status of Rare. About 25 occurrences have been documented in the state.



Conservation Considerations
Maintenance of natural populations of umbrella magnolia and its habitat type will be enhanced by creating buffers around fragmented woodland habitat and controlling invasive species. Populations of umbrella magnolia that have resulted from escapes from cultivation are not considered to be of conservation significance.

NatureServe conservation status ranks
G5 – Globally secure; S2 – Imperiled in Pennsylvania

References

- NatureServe. 2014. NatureServe Explorer: An online encyclopedia of life [web application]. Version 6.1. NatureServe, Arlington, Virginia. Available http://www.natureserve.org/explorer.
- Rhoads, A.F. and T.A. Block. 2007. The Plants of Pennsylvania: An Illustrated Manual. 2nd edition. University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia.

Pennsylvania Natural Heritage Program