

SWEET GUM

Liquidambar styraciflua

Also known as Red Gum



tree.

Description: A large deciduous hardwood tree forming a beautifully symmetric, cone shaped crown that becomes more rounded as the tree matures. It is easily identified by star shaped, palmate leaves that are 4-7 inches in diameter. The blooms are inconspicuous, but it's infamous hard, spiny golf ball sized fruit make it an easily identified

Natural Habitat: Wetlands and upland areas

Conservation Status: None noted

Size: 60 -100 ft.

Growth Rate: Rapid

Light: Full sun to filtered shade

Planting and Care: Grows best in moist, well-drained areas, but will succeed on drier spots and is even rather drought resistant. In a prime site, sweet gum can grow to be a true forest giant.

Ornamental Value: Widely planted as an ornamental for its brilliant fall foliage varying in shades of yellow, orange, scarlet, purple.

Landscape Usage: An excellent choice as a street tree, shade tree, specimen tree or as a windbreak tree.

Commercial/Traditional Uses: Used for veneer, furniture, interior trim and woodenware, in addition to pulpwood for fine papers. The dark purple to reddish brown heartwood is marketed under trade names such as *Italian mahogany* and *satin walnut*.

Wildlife Benefits: Sweet gum is a favorite of yellow-bellied sapsuckers. Look for their parallel rows of little square holes in the bark.