

BLACKGUM

Nyssa sylvatica

Aka: Sour or Blackgum, Black Tupelo, Pepperidge



Description: A tall growing deciduous tree having a straight trunk and rough grayish brown bark. Its narrow crown is often rounded when grown in the open. The branches dip down slightly at the ends. In early summer, they bear small, greenish-yellow male and female flowers followed by bunches of 1/2-inch, egg-shaped, bluish-black berries.

Natural Habitat: Near swamps and stream edges.

Size: 30 to 80 feet in height

Growth Rate: Moderate

Light: Full sun to partial shade

Planting and Care: Moist, but well drained soil. Difficult to transplant due to its tap root. Plenty of water is required during dry periods. Plant in an area sheltered from the wind. Pruning, which is hardly needed, should be done in the fall. This consists of removing the lower branches as the trees grow in height and maintaining a clear trunk on young trees.

Ornamental Value: Glossy green foliage turning to bright colors in the fall.

Landscape Usage: Use as a specimen or street tree

Commercial/Traditional Uses: Commonly used to make plywood, boxes, pulp, cooperage, woodenware, handles and other items.

Wildlife Benefits: Honey plant for bees, and its fruit attracts many birds species.