

Sweet Gum

Liquidambar styraciflua



American Sweetgum is a widely distributed large deciduous tree native to the Southeastern USA. It grows in deep acid sands in low wet areas in east Texas. As it ages its attractive narrowly pyramid form changes to a more oval crown. The five-lobed, nearly star-shaped dark glossy green leaves turn beautiful combinations of yellow, orange, red, and purple in autumn. It suffers from chlorosis in shallow limestone soil, and even in areas with 35 inches of annual rainfall it needs supplemental moisture. The fruit is a spiny capsule that persists into winter.

Plant Habit or Use: medium tree large tree

Exposure: sun

Flower Color: green, not ornamental

Blooming Period: spring

Fruit Characteristics: spherical woody, spiny capsule

Height: 40 to 60 ft in landscapes, double that in the wild

Width: 20 to 30 ft.

Plant Character: deciduous

Heat Tolerance: very high

Water Requirements: high medium

Soil Requirements: acid