

SWEET GUM

Liquidamber styraciflua



DECIDUOUS TREE



GUM BALL

Family:	Sweetgum
Native to:	Southeastern U.S.
Hardiness Zones:	6 to 9
Bloom Time:	April to September
Height	60 to 100 feet
Spread:	50 to 75 feet
Leaf:	Fragrant when crushed /bruised
Bloom:	Lavender blue

Culture:

The Sweetgum tree is easily grown in average, medium moisture, well-drained soils in full sun. Intolerant of shade, Sweet Gum prefers deep, moist, fertile soils, but seems to tolerate a wide variety of soils, except alkaline.

The Sweetgum has non-showy, monoecious, yellow-green flowers that appear in spherical clusters in April-May. Female flowers give way to the infamous gum balls which are hard, spherical, bristly fruiting clusters to 1.5" diameter. Gum balls mature to dark brown and usually remain on the tree through the winter, but can create clean-up problems during the general period of December through April as the clusters fall to the ground.

Fall color is a brilliant mixture of yellows, oranges, purples and reds.

Did you know:

The name comes from an aromatic balsam (gum) that exudes from wounds to the tree. In the past, the gum was used for folk medicines, chewing gum, incense, perfumes, flavorings, soaps, and adhesives. Today its wood is valuable for fine furniture and interior finishing.

Beavers, mice and rabbits eat the bark. Songbirds like the American goldfinch eat the seeds during the winter.

