

Liquidambar styraciflua

(Sweetgum, American Sweetgum)

Sweetgum is a tall, deciduous tree native to parts of the eastern United States, Mexico, and Central America. It has glossy, star-shaped leaves that change color in fall. Some trees have corky projections on their branches. It is susceptible to surface rooting, so plant trees several meters from curbs and streets. Its fruits are spiny and painful to step on. It grows easily from seed, which also provide food for wildlife. It adapts to many different environments, but does poorly in shallow, dry soil and alkaline soils.



Plant Image

Landscape Information

French Name: Liquidambar, Styrax d'Amérique, Copalme d'Amérique

Pronunciation: ick-wid-AM-bar sty-rass-ih-FLOO-uh

Plant Type: Tree

Origin: Eastern United States, Mexico, Central America

Heat Zones: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10

Hardiness Zones: 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10

Uses: Specimen, Shade, Wildlife, Street, Pollution Tolerant / Urban, Reclamation

Size/Shape

Growth Rate: Moderate

Tree Shape: Pyramidal, oval

Canopy Symmetry: Symmetrical

Canopy Density: Medium

Canopy Texture: Coarse

Height at Maturity: 8 to 15 m, 15 to 23 m

Spread at Maturity: 8 to 10 meters

Time to Ultimate Height: More than 50 Years

Liquidambar styraciflua

(Sweetgum, American Sweetgum)



Flower Image

Botanical Description

Foliage

Leaf Arrangement: Alternate

Leaf Venation: Palmate

Leaf Persistence: Deciduous

Leaf Type: Simple

Leaf Blade: 10 - 20

Leaf Shape: Star

Leaf Margins: Serrate

Leaf Textures: Glossy, Medium

Leaf Scent: Pleasant

Color(growing season): Green

Color(changing season): Yellow, Orange, Red, Purple

Flower

Flower Showiness: False

Flower Size Range: 0 - 1.5

Flower Type: Raceme

Flower Sexuality: Monoecious (Bisexual)

Flower Scent: No Fragrance

Flower Color: Green, Yellow

Seasons: Spring

Trunk

Trunk Has Crownshaft: False

Trunk Susceptibility to Breakage: Generally resists breakage

Number of Trunks: Single Trunk

Trunk Esthetic Values: Not Showy

Fruit

Fruit Type: Capsule

Fruit Showiness: True

Fruit Size Range: 3 - 7

Fruit Colors: Brown

Seasons: Spring

Liquidambar styraciflua

(Sweetgum, American Sweetgum)



© Photo by Monika Fabian

Leaf Image

Horticulture Management

Tolerance

Frost Tolerant: Yes

Heat Tolerant: No

Drought Tolerant: No

Salt Tolerance: Moderate

Requirements

Soil Requirements: Clay, Loam, Sand

Soil Ph Requirements: Acidic, Neutral

Water Requirements: Moderate

Light Requirements: Full, Part

Management

Invasive Potential: No

Susceptibility to Pests and Diseases: No

Pruning Requirement: Little needed, to develop a strong structure

Fruit/ Leaves/ Flowers litter: Yes

Surface Rooting: Yes

Life Span: More than 50

Diseases: Leaf Spots, Canker, Dieback

Edible Parts: None

Pests: Caterpillars, Scales, Leaf Miner

Plant Propagations: Seed, Cutting

MORE IMAGES



Fruit Image



Bark Image



Other Image