

## Sweetgum (*Liquidambar styraciflua*)



Sweetgum grows in a narrow pyramid to a height of 75 feet and may spread to 50 feet. The beautifully glossy, star-shaped leaves turn bright red, purple, yellow or orange in early winter. On some young trees, branches are covered with characteristic corky projections (similar to the Winged Elm).

Sweetgum makes a nice residential shade tree for large properties, developing a more oval or rounded canopy as it grows older. But be careful when locating Sweetgum, since aggressive roots may lift driveways and sidewalks. (Plant trees 8 to 10 feet or more away.)



The fruit are round and spikey, and may be a litter nuisance to some in the fall. The seeds provide food for wildlife, but the cultivar 'Rotundiloba' is fruitless.



Sweetgum grows well in full sun to partial shade, is rarely attacked by pests, and tolerates wet soils, but yellowing is often seen in alkaline (high pH) soils.



Information Source:

Gilman, E. F. and Watson, D.G. (1993). *Liquidambar styraciflua*: Sweetgum. University of Florida. <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/st358>

Photos by: Alicia Lamborn