

***Liquidambar styraciflua* L.**

Common Name	Sweet Gum
Botanical Name	<i>Liquidambar styraciflua</i>
Family	Hamamelidaceae
Form	Tree
Growth Habit	The crown of this deciduous tree is shaped like a pyramid. It can grow from 60'-100' with a trunk 1 ½'-3' in diameter.
Bark	Gray and cracked into vertical scales.
Leaves	Alternate leaves which are glossy green and star-shaped with 5 or 7 lobes having slightly serrated edges. They are from 3"-6" long and wide, and during the fall change color to yellow, red, or purple.
Flowers	No petals, with male and female flowers appearing separately on the same tree. Male flowers have an upright stalk that is 3"-4" long with many stamens, while female flowers are green and ball-shaped in dangling clusters that are ½" in diameter.
Fruit	The 1"-1 ½" in diameter round, pointy fruits turn brown at maturity in late fall. They are composed of individual fruits each having 2 long, curved points. Each ball contains about 20 winged seeds.
Soil conditions	The Sweet Gum is typically found in moist, acidic soils.
Water	Seedlings of this species need consistent water, but once established the trees are drought tolerant.
Light Requirement	Sun to partial shade.
Native Growth Zone	8-9
Propagation	Seed, cuttings, grafting
Habitat	Often found as a colonizer in old fields and wetlands, and also in woodlands and clearings.
Remarks	The placement of the tree is important in that the falling fruit can be a nuisance; it is pointy and painful to step on. The Sweet Gum is named for a gummy resin that is released when the bark is damaged. The resin was once used as a chewing gum and for medicinal purposes. The tree is also an important timber tree.
Works Consulted	Florida Gardener's Guide, Florida Landscape Plants, A Gardener's Guide to Florida's Native Plants, National Audubon Society Field Guide to Trees, Native Florida Plants, The Trees of Florida, Hortus Third