

Botanical Name: Liquidambar styraciflua (3 varieties available)

Common Name: American sweet gum

Type of Plant: dicot: tree Character deciduous

Habit of Growth:

Overall Shape an erect, single-trunked tree (sometimes develops a second leader part-way up canopy); develops strongly pyramidal form when young; white corky bark develops on older branches; lateral branches short, spread horiz.

Height 20-40' (60') Spread 1/2-2/3 Growth Rate moderate

Environment:

Exposure outdoors full or partial sun; develops better fall color in full sun

Soil a deep moist loam preferred-tolerates wet soils

Hardiness hardy (zones 1-9, 14-24); thrives in warm humid areas

Morphology:

Leaves palmate, alternate - whorled, 5-7 lobed, 4-7" wide, margins serrate; petioles 4-6" long; bright green, turning gold, orange or to purple-red in fall

Flowers unisexual, small, lack petals; pistillate flowers are in round heads (1" diameter); the staminate flowers in small terminal racemes

Fruit tiny capsules; crowded in the round head "spiny ball"

Propagation: seed, followed by grafting

Usage: widely used vertical accent tree form, prized for fall color and branch structure; suitable for lawn or street tree; for groves or screens; shallow surface roots and suckering is a problem; fruit-drop

Landscape Care:

Watering regular; tolerates lawn watering-can survive drought after established

Fertilizing balanced, in spring; add iron to correct chlorosis

Pruning remove lowest branches or thin as needed; avoid heading back

Pests/Diseases relatively free; resistant to oak root fungus

Special Conditions 'Palo Alto' (orange-red), 'Burgundy' (deep maroon), 'Festival' (peach-orange or gold to bright red)

Origin: East U.S. Family: Hamamelidaceae