TREE SPECIES SPOTLIGHT

VIEW PLANTING RESOURCES

Liquidambar styraciflua

American Sweetgum

COMMON NAME
Sweetgum

The American sweetgum is an attractive tree, boasting glossy-green star-shaped leaves, a compact crown, beautiful fall colors, interesting fruit, and twigs with unique growths called wings. It is a prized specimen in parks, campuses, and large yards across the country.



USDA HARDINESS ZONES
5-9

GROWTH SPEED
Medium to Fast

SUN PREFERENCES
Full Sun

SOIL PREFERENCES
Acidic, Clay, Drought, Loamy, Moist, Sandy, Well Drained, Wet

MATURE TREE HEIGHT & SPREAD ESTIMATION
Height: 60 - 75 ft tall
Spread: 40 - 50 ft wide

TREE SHAPE
Oval

TREE CATEGORY
Native, Shade, Wildlife Friendly

WHAT'S GROWING

Decidedly shaped like a "gumball," the distinctive fruit is hard and spiky, measuring about 1"–1.5" in diameter.

PLANTING AT HOME

- Choose a place to plant away from sidewalks, power lines, buildings, and pipes with plenty of space for roots to expand. Think about how tall your tree will be at maturity and how much sunlight your species needs.
- Call 811 before you dig to avoid any underground lines.
- Dig a hole about three to four times as wide as the container and as far as the roots spread out.
- Center your tree so the root collar sits even with the ground.
- Firmly pack the soil.

TREE CARE MAINTENANCE

- Add natural mulch in a 3-foot circle around the tree, about 2 to 4 inches deep. Keep mulch from touching the trunk. Think doughnut, not volcano.
- Water generously every 7 to 10 days during the first year.
- Do not use fertilizer, potting soil, or chemicals on your young tree; this could actually harm it. Soil typically has all the nutrients trees need.
- Consider a small fence made of chicken wire to protect your tree from hungry wildlife.

WILDLIFE VALUE

American sweetgum seeds are eaten by eastern goldfinches, purple finches, sparrows, mourning doves, northern bobwhites, and wild turkeys. Small mammals such as chipmunks, red squirrels, and gray squirrels also enjoy the fruits and seeds.

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