

Sweetgum - *Liquidambar styraciflua*

General Information: Sweetgum grows naturally in a narrow pyramid. It has glossy, star-shaped leaves which turn bright red, purple, yellow or orange in the fall/early winter. The trunk is normally straight and does not divide into multiple trunks. The bark becomes deeply ridged. It is native to North America.

Family: Hamamelidaceae.

Lighting: Will grow in full sun or partial shade.

Temperature: Zones 5B - 10A. More restricted zones may apply to some of the dwarf varieties.

Watering: It is moderately drought tolerant.

Fertilizing: To retain and produce small leaves, do not feed high nitrogen fast-acting fertilizers. Feeding three times a year is sufficient to maintain good color and healthy growth without enlarging the size of the leaves.

Pruning and wiring: Much shaping can be done by pruning.

Propagation: Cuttings, seeds.

Repotting: They transplant well. Any type of soil with a pH of 7 or less, and with good drainage seems to grow them well. They have heavy root growth so must have root room.

Pests and diseases: Bagworm, fall webworm, leaf miner, cottony-cushion scale, sweetgum scale, walnut scale, and tent caterpillars. Diseases include canker and leaf spots.

Bibliography:

USDA Fact Sheet ST - 358

Compiled by Thomas L. Zane