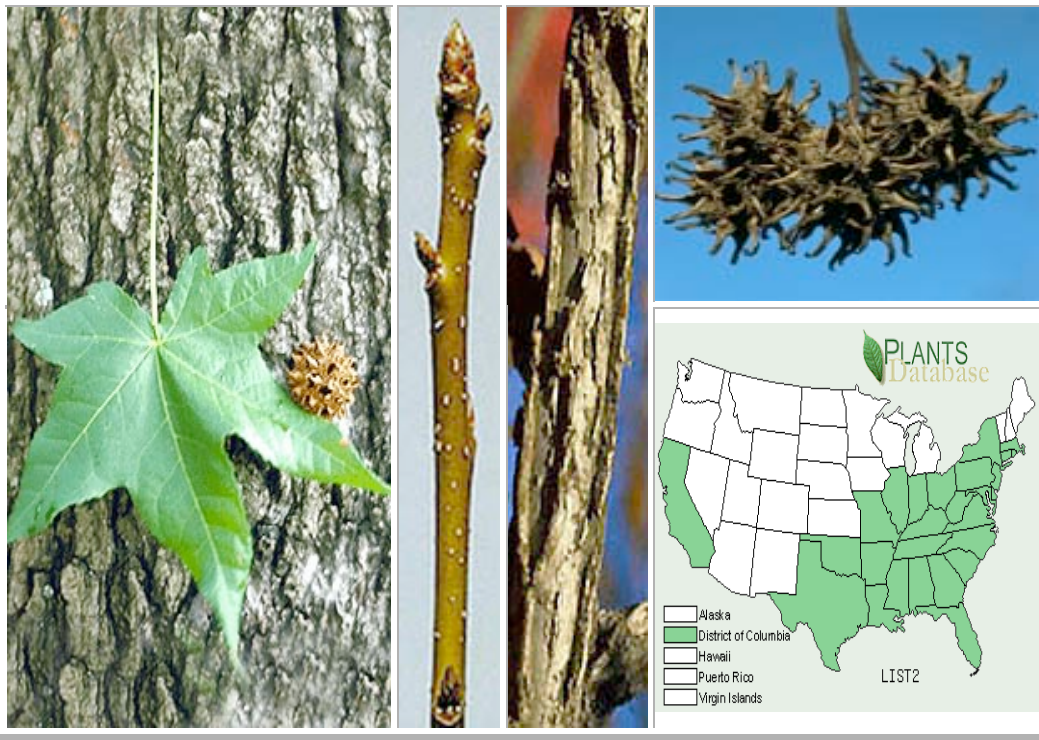




Sweetgum - *Liquidambar styraciflua*

Description: Sweetgum is a large deciduous hardwood tree that can grow to height over 100 ft (30.5 m). This large hardwood tree is used for veneer, furniture, woodenware, etc. Its blooms are inconspicuous, but it is sweetgum's infamous fruits that let you know there's a sweetgum around - especially when you step on one barefoot. Sweetgum has been widely planted as an ornamental, especially outside of its natural range, due to its brilliant fall foliage (usually red). It is a popular species for erosion control, windbreaks, wildlife, timber and beautification. It typically grows in bottomland areas.



Leaf: Alternate, simple, palmately veined, orbicular, 4 to 6 inches across with 5 to 7 lobes (look like stars), and a finely serrate margin. Shiny green above and pubescent in the axils of the veins below, fragrant when crushed.

Flower: Monoecious; female borne on a slender stalk, capped with a globose head, male flowers borne on an upright raceme; both are small, bright yellow-green (tinged with red) and not showy, appear in early to mid-spring.

Fruit: Easy to identify spiny "gumballs", woody brown spherical cluster of capsules, 1 to 1 1/2 inches in diameter with openings in the surface that release 2 seeds from each capsule; maturing in fall.

Twig: Medium textured, shiny green to yellow-brown, usually with apparent corky outgrowths, particularly when fast growing. The terminal bud is large and is usually sticky, covered with green to orange-brown, shiny scales.

Bark: Gray-brown, irregular furrows and rough rounded ridges.

Form: A medium to large tree to 80 feet tall with a straight stem and a pyramidal crown, especially when young.

Site Requirements: Prefers rich, moist soil, but can tolerate a variety of soil conditions. The tree does not do well planted in locations where roots are limited in their development. It grows best on moderately coarse to fine soils that are well drained and slightly acid (pH 6.1- 6.5). Sweetgum is very intolerant to shade but tolerant to flooding. It also tolerates seaside sites if protected from high winds.

Native Range: 5-8

AL, AR, CA, CT, DC, DE, FL, GA, IL, IN, KY, LA, MD, MO, MS, NC, NJ, NY, OH, PA, RI, SC, TN, TX, VA, WV