

# Nyssa sylvatica

## Black Gum, Sour Gum, Black Tupelo

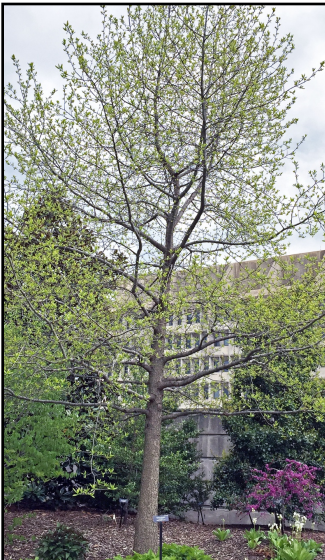



Tried and True

Native Plant Selections

for the Mid-Atlantic

Commonly found in a variety of sites from creek bottoms to upland slopes throughout the Mid-Atlantic Region (except for northern-most Pennsylvania), Black Gum is noted for its beautiful yellow to orange to scarlet fall foliage. Bees make a flavorful honey from the nectar-rich flowers, while many birds and mammals enjoy the juicy fruit.



Tree	Spring & Fall Trees, Male Flowers, Fruit, Bark	
Height: 30–75 feet		
Spread: 20–50 feet		
Bloom Color: Greenish white		
Characteristics		
Medium-sized, <a href="#">deciduous</a> tree with straight trunk and dense rounded crown		
<a href="#">Dioecious</a> : male or female tree; <a href="#">polygamodioecious</a>		
<a href="#">Alternate</a> , <a href="#">pinnate</a> , <a href="#">obovate</a> to <a href="#">elliptic</a> , glossy leaves		
Small flower clusters— <a href="#">staminate umbels</a> ; sparse, dense, headlike female clusters—April to June		
Bluish <a href="#">ovoid/ellipsoid drupes</a> September to October		
Impressive yellow, orange, red or purple fall foliage		
Gray furrowed <a href="#">bark</a> turns black and alligator hide-like as tree ages; limbs often at right angles to trunk		
Attributes		
Tolerates <a href="#">clay soil</a> , wet soil, and some drought		
No serious pests or diseases; <a href="#">deer</a> rarely damage but may browse on twigs and foliage		
Flowers attract bees; <a href="#">larval</a> host of several moth species; fruits attract birds and other wildlife; cavities provide dens and nesting habitat		
Growing and Maintenance Tips	Excellent Replacement for	
<a href="#">Soil Requirements</a> : Well-drained, acidic	<a href="#">Acer platanoides</a> - Norway Maple	
<a href="#">Light Requirements</a> : Sun, Partial Shade	<i>Broussonetia papyrifera</i> - Paper Mulberry	
<a href="#">Water Requirements</a> : Moist, Wet	<i>Melia azedarach</i> - Chinaberry	
Site carefully as it is difficult to transplant	<a href="#">Morus alba</a> - White Mulberry	
Use for lawn, street, rain garden, or erosion control		
<a href="#">Hardiness</a> : USDA Zones 3–9		
developed by Master Gardeners of Northern Virginia, serving Arlington and Alexandria		

Images by Elaine Mills, National Garden, U.S. Botanic Garden; Washington Blvd, Arlington, VA; Rady Park Arboretum; Glencarlyn Library Community Garden; and Meadowlark Botanical Gardens