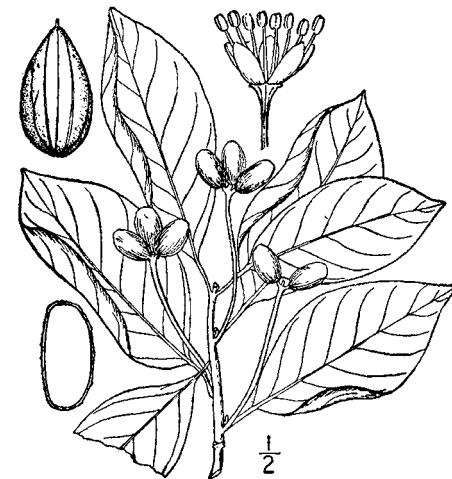


Black Gum



Black Gum

Description: The black gum is also known as the black tupelo and is often cultivated as an ornamental for its foliage, bark, and winter silhouette. In the spring and summer it has dark glossy leaves but it is especially known for its brilliant fall colors and beautiful winter form. It has unique, thick bark that is arranged in six-sided plates that is often described as looking like alligator hide. It is a striking tree throughout the year, and as it grows older, its graceful, drooping branches add to the distinct form and beauty.

Height: 30 - 50 feet.

Trunk Diameter: 2 feet or less.

Spread: 20 - 30 feet.

Growth Rate: Slow.

Leaves: Dark, glossy foliage.

Fall Color: Crimson, purple, yellow or orange colors often on the same branch.

Flowers: Flowers are small and insignificant and occur from April through June.

Fruit: The bitter, 1/2-inch blue-black drupes are favored by wildlife but are not particularly ornamental and drop from September to November.

Root: NA

Sun: Full and part shade.

Issues: As black gums age, they begin decaying from the top so trees become shorter as they grow older. Because the trees decay in their heartwood first, this results in hollow trees. In the forest hollow trees are cut down and then cut into short sections and used for beehives. Black gum is one of the best honey-producing trees in the world. The fruit of the black gum is also an important wildlife food and is eaten by many birds and animals.