Tupelo or Sour Gum, Wildfire

Nyssa sylvatica 'Wildfire'

Height: 40 feet

Spread: 25 feet

Sunlight: ○ ◐

Hardiness Zone: 4a

Other Names: Black Gum, Black Tupelo, Sour Gum, Pepperidge

Description:

A glorious native variety producing bold red new foliage that matures to dark green, then a fiery scarlet in fall; a neat, pyramidal habit of growth when young; Prefers some wind protection.

Ornamental Features

Tupelo or Sour Gum, Wildfire is primarily valued in the landscape for its distinctively pyramidal habit of growth. It has forest green deciduous foliage which emerges red in spring. The glossy pointy leaves turn an outstanding crimson in the fall. The furrowed black bark adds an interesting dimension to the landscape.

Landscape Attributes

Tupelo or Sour Gum, Wildfire is a deciduous tree with a strong central leader and a distinctive and refined pyramidal form. Its average texture blends into the landscape, but can be balanced by one or two finer or coarser trees or shrubs for an effective composition.

This is a relatively low maintenance tree, and is best pruned in late winter once the threat of extreme cold has passed. It is a good choice for attracting birds to your yard. It has no significant negative characteristics.

Tupelo or Sour Gum, Wildfire is recommended for the following landscape applications;

- Accent
- Shade
- Vertical Accent



Tupelo or Sour Gum, Wildfire in fall
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder



Tupelo or Sour Gum, Wildfire
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

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Planting & Growing

Tupelo or Sour Gum, Wildfire will grow to be about 40 feet tall at maturity, with a spread of 25 feet. It has a high canopy of foliage that sits well above the ground, and should not be planted underneath power lines. As it matures, the lower branches of this tree can be strategically removed to create a high enough canopy to support unobstructed human traffic underneath. It grows at a medium rate, and under ideal conditions can be expected to live for 70 years or more.

This tree does best in full sun to partial shade. It does best in average to evenly moist conditions, but will not tolerate standing water. This plant should be periodically fertilized throughout the active growing season with a specially-formulated acidic fertilizer. It is not particular as to soil pH, but grows best in rich soils. It is somewhat tolerant of urban pollution, and will benefit from being planted in a relatively sheltered location. This is a selection of a native North American species.

Clean up Rating (1-5) 1=least effort 5=most effort

Clean Up Rating (1): Flowers are insignificant, Generally no berries unless both male & female are within a half mile distance of each other. Clean up is blowing or raking debris onto the lawn and mow or bag.



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