

2025 Native Plant of Distinction: Black Gum (or Black Tupelo) (*Nyssa sylvatica*)



Lake Erie Allegheny Partnership
for Biodiversity
leapbio.org



Unique Characteristics

Black gum or black tupelo has been called the most beautiful of the native trees. With its tall, straight trunk and scarlet fall foliage this tree is adaptable to wet and dry soils. The juicy fruit of the female tree is a treat for many birds and mammals.

Plant Type: Tree

Native Range: Eastern North America

Sun: Full sun to part shade

Water: Medium to wet

Soil: Prefers moist, acidic soil

pH: 4.5 to 6.0

Height: 30 to 50 feet

Spread: 20 to 30 feet

Wildlife: Black bears, foxes, a variety of birds eat the fruit; provides cavity and nesting sites for a variety of birds and mammals

Hardiness Zones: 3 to 9

Bloom Time: Greenish-white flowers in May to June

Fall Color: Purple to bright scarlet

Uses: Shade tree, street tree; rain garden; tolerates clay soil; re-establishes well in erosion-prone areas; well adapted to fire



April is

**Ohio Native
Plant Month**

Photos by Patti Donnellan (top) & Bill Hendricks (bottom)

Sponsored by the Native Plant Promotion Committee of LEAP