Afterburner Black Gum

Nyssa sylvatica 'David Odom'



Afterburner Black Gum
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Height: 35 feet

Spread: 20 feet

Sunlight: ○ ◐

Hardiness Zone: 5a

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

Description:

A glorious native variety producing bold red new foliage that matures to glossy dark green, then a fiery scarlet in fall; a neat, pyramidal habit of growth when young; needs moist, organic, acidic soils, intolerant of urban pollution

Ornamental Features

Afterburner Black Gum 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 scarlet in the fall. The furrowed black bark adds an interesting dimension to the landscape.



Afterburner Black Gum foliage
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Landscape Attributes

Afterburner Black Gum 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.

Afterburner Black Gum is recommended for the following landscape applications;

- Accent
- Shade
- Vertical Accent

Planting & Growing

Afterburner Black Gum will grow to be about 35 feet tall at maturity, with a spread of 20 feet. It has a low canopy with a typical clearance of 3 feet from the ground, and should not be planted underneath power lines. It grows at a slow 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. It is very fussy about its soil conditions and must have rich, acidic soils to ensure success, and is subject to chlorosis (yellowing) of the foliage in alkaline soils. It is quite intolerant of urban pollution, therefore inner city or urban streetside plantings are best avoided, and will benefit from being planted in a relatively sheltered location. Consider applying a thick mulch around the root zone in winter to protect it in exposed locations or colder microclimates. This is a selection of a native North American species.