Native Plant of the Year:
Black Gum (or Black Tupelo)
Nyssa sylvatica

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

Photos courtesy of Bill Hendricks (above and bottom left) and Ann McCulloh (bottom right)

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