

Liquidambar styraciflua 'Palo Alto'

Palo Alto Sweetgum



Liquidambar styraciflua 'Palo Alto' (Palo Alto sweet gum) is an American selection found in 1954 by George Hood and Maunsell van Rensselaer from the Saratoga Horticultural Foundation in California, USA, where it is very popular as a street and avenue tree. The selection attains a height of between ten and fifteen metres and has a regularly pyramidal crown form up to twelve metres wide. In addition to its regular crown structure, cultivar 'Palo Alto' was selected because of the abundance of corky fissures which are present even on young shoots and, of course, the spectacular autumn colour.

At the end of April or early May *Liquidambar styraciflua* 'Palo Alto' bears unremarkable yellow-green flower spikes. After flowering - in comparison with other selections - this sweet gum bears little fruit. In spring the palmate leaf emerges red-brown and changes colour to dark green and in autumn the tree surprises with a fantastic display of yellow-orange to bright orange-red foliage. In winter the densely branched crown is clearly recognisable as is the distinctive rough trunk, reinforced by the obvious corky fissures present on the twigs and branches.

Liquidambar styraciflua 'Palo Alto' is tolerant of paved areas and is, therefore, an excellent street and avenue tree. Despite the fairly warm climate of the location where the selection was found in the USA the tree is hardy. Less tolerant of wind, an exposed site may lead to breaking branches. So, plant *Liquidambar styraciflua* 'Palo Alto' in a bright, sheltered location on moist, nutrient-rich soil for best growth and autumn colour.

TYPES OF PLANTING

Tree types: standard trees, shade trees

USE

Location: street, avenue, square, car park / parking lot, park, central reservation, large garden, cemetery | **Pavement:** none, open, sealed

CHARACTERISTICS

Crown shape: wide egg-shaped, pyramidal | **Crown structure:** dense | **Height:** 10 - 15 m | **Width:** 8 - 12 m | **Winter hardiness zone:** 5B - 10B

ASPECTS

Wind: slightly tolerant to wind | **Soil:** loess, sabulous clay, peaty, light clay, sand, loamy soil | **Nutrient level:** moderately rich in nutrients, rich in nutrients | **Soil moisture level:** moist, wet | **Light requirements:** sun | **pH range:** acidic, neutral

PLANTKENMERKEN

Flowers: spikes, discrete | **Flower colour:** yellow-green | **Flowering period:** April - May | **Leaf colour:** buds orange-red, green, dark green | **Leaves:** deciduous, palmate, dissected, serrate, lobate | **Autumn colour:** yellow-orange, orange-red, dark red | **Fruits:** rarely fruits, few fruits, small, capsule, spiny nut | **Fruit colour:** brown | **Bark colour:** grey | **Bark:** furrowed, corky | **Twig colour:** red-brown | **Twigs:** corky | **Root system:** deep, extensive, fleshy roots, central root

