

Liquidambar styraciflua Variegata Group



In 2004, the yearbook of the International Dendrological Association proposed that *Liquidambar styraciflua* Variegata Group will now be used as the collective name for the group of variegated Liquidambar selections, hitherto known as 'Aura', 'Aureum' and 'Variegata'. They are slow-growing trees but can ultimately attain a height of up to fifteen metres. The sweet gums classified under the *Liquidambar styraciflua* Variegata Group have an upright main trunk with a narrowly egg-shaped crown around four metres wide.

Liquidambar styraciflua Variegata Group bears inconspicuous yellow-green flower spikes at the end of April or early May. This selection does not produce many fruits but the small, spiky, brown-green nuts which appear after flowering are very striking. The different cultivars of variegated sweet gums were formerly differentiated by minimal differences in the size of the leaf, variations in any spots and speckles and also colour variations in the (juvenile) autumn foliage. The familiar, palmate, 5-lobed leaf of *Liquidambar styraciflua* Variegata Group emerges yellowish with pink, colourful sections and in summer is marked with white-yellow mottling and speckles. For a sweet gum, the autumn colouring is rather subdued with yellowish to pale pink-red tints. The shoots and branches do not feature the corky fissures characteristic of Liquidambar.

The selections of the *Liquidambar styraciflua* Variegata Group are ideal for use as a street or avenue tree. But also in parks and gardens the trees light up an area with their characteristic foliage and thus make a fine addition to the environment. The cultivars - owing to the possibility of sunburn on the variegated foliage - must not be placed in the direct glare of the sun. It does not tolerate wind well either as the group of trees has fragile, easily breakable branches. *Liquidambar styraciflua* Variegata Group enjoys a light and sheltered site on reasonably nutrient-rich to nutrient-rich, acid to neutral soil.

TYPES OF PLANTING

Tree types: standard trees, feathered trees, shade trees

USE

Location: street, avenue, park, central reservation, large garden, cemetery | **Pavement:** none, open, sealed

CHARACTERISTICS

Crown shape: narrow egg-shaped | **Crown structure:** semi-open | **Height:** 7 - 15 m | **Width:** 4 - 5 m | **Winter hardiness zone:** 5B - 10B

ASPECTS

Wind: intolerant 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, heads, discrete | **Flower colour:** yellow-green | **Flowering period:** April - May | **Leaf colour:** variegated yellow, buds yellow, buds pink, Variegated leaf | **Leaves:** deciduous, palmate, scented with confusion, lacinate, crenate, lobate | **Autumn colour:** pale yellow, red, pink | **Fruits:** striking, small, capsule, spiny nut | **Fruit colour:** brown-green | **Bark colour:** grey-brown | **Bark:** furrowed | **Twig colour:** brown-green | **Twigs:** bare, with lenticels | **Root system:** deep, extensive, fleshy roots, central root

