

Liquidambar - Growing Guide

Growing Liquidambar

After the problems with *Phytophthora ramorum* and *Rhododendron ponticum* (2003 to 2010) and the consequent clearance of this windbreak species at both Burncoose and Caerhays we suddenly found space in visible exposed areas to plant liquidambar species and hybrids specifically for the varied and intense autumn colours which these wonderful trees produce.

Liquidambers are a genus of four species of deciduous trees which all have maple like leaves. They do not tolerate chalk but are otherwise fairly vigorous and easy to grow. By far the most popular species is *L. styraciflua* from the east of the USA where it is one of the key contributors to the autumn colour spectacle that visitors travel to Canada and North America to see.

L. styraciflua (sweet gum) has cork-like bark and its leaves have five or seven lobes. In autumn the name liquid-amber readily describes its gorgeous crimson colour. Increasingly we are trying to offer other cultivars of this species which have different leaf forms, growth habits and varied autumn colours. *L. styraciflua* 'Worplesdon' (which is supposed to be the only form which produces fruit in the UK but has yet to do so for us) has long narrow leaf lobes and turns orange and yellow in autumn. 'Oconee' and 'Gum Ball' have shrubby habits and my Garden Diary has shown how these turn progressively orange-red and purple in autumn. 'Lane Roberts' has rich blackish crimson-red autumn colour. The colour ranges through the autumn are enormous. Some start in September and are long lasting in a frost free autumn.





L. acalycina is more vigorous a tree than *L. styraciflua*. However it was only introduced to the UK in 1980 and is only now appearing in the nursery trade. The leaves are a striking bronze-purple when young before fading to dark green. They hold on the tree long into autumn and revert then to the same tints and colours as earlier. This is a species which will grow in popularity. *L. acalycina* 'Spinners', which we offer at times, is particularly fine and worth its place.



View this video on Youtube here <https://www.youtube.com/MYKPo6jUYng?si=Ab6ftyOr0V1rMA3X>

Burncoose Nurseries: Gwennap, Redruth, Cornwall TR16 6BJ

Telephone: +44 (0) 1209 860316 Fax: +44 (0) 1209 860011 Email: info@burncoose.co.uk

© Burncoose Nurseries 1997 - 2026