

## NYSSACEAE – SOUR GUM FAMILY

**Plant:** shrubs or mostly trees

**Stem:**

**Root:**

**Leaves:** simple, alternate; no stipules

**Flowers:** perfect, some imperfect; 5 sepals (often reduced) or none; 5 petals (sometimes more or none); 5-10, rarely 12 stamens in 2 series; ovary inferior, 6-10 carpels

**Fruit:** drupe or stone (1-6 seeds)

**Other:** often included in the Cornaceae (Dogwood Family); Dicotyledons Group

**Genera:** *Nyssa* (sour gum) – some workers put these in the Cornaceae family.

## **NYSSACEAE – SOUR GUM FAMILY**

**Water Tupelo or Tupelo Gum; *Nyssa aquatic* L.  
Black Gum [Sour Gum]; *Nyssa sylvatica* Marsh.**

# Water Tupelo or Tupelo Gum

*Nyssa aquatic* L.

Nyssaceae (Sour Gum Family)

Otter Slough area, Stoddard County, Missouri

Notes: tree; dioecious; staminate flowers in clusters and pistillate flower solitary, 5 petals; leaves fairly large, alternate, simple, mostly ovate and entire or with 1 to few coarse teeth, short tip but fairly sharp, shiny dark green above, paler and finely hairy below; bark thin and grooved, base is quite swollen; twigs chambered with white pith; fruit a blue-black berry (green early) with white spots at maturity; spring to early summer

[V Max Brown, 2017]



# Black-Gum [Sour Gum]

*Nyssa sylvatica* Marsh.

Nyssaceae (Sour Gum Family)

Oak Openings Metropark, Lucas County, Ohio

Notes: tree; flowers greenish (dioecious); leaves alternate, mostly entire but a few teeth may be present, short tip but fairly sharp, shiny dark green above, paler and mostly smooth below; bark checkered, often deeply, in swamps base is swollen; twigs chambered with white pith, bends without breaking; buds brown with several scales; fruit a blue-black berry (1-3 on pedicel); spring to early summer

[V Max Brown, 2005]

