

Black Gum

Nyssa sylvatica

The Black Gum is also known as the Tupelo or Black Tupelo. Curiously the name Black Gum is somewhat inappropriate since no part of the tree is particularly “gummy”.

The bark of the Black Gum is dark gray and flaky when young, but becomes furrowed with age, said to resemble alligator hide on very old trees.

This tree is a popular treat in the forest. Deer are extremely fond of seedling leaves, their greenish-white flowers are a rich source of nectar for bees and their black-blue fruit is very popular with small birds, especially robins. The Black Gum commonly develops hollows that are prime hive locals for wild bees and in fact some bee keepers in the U.S. have used their hollow trunks as Natural bee hives.

This tree often grows in the proximity of Beautyberry shrubs, just as it does in this park.



This sign provided by Polk County Fresh Water Supply District #2