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Names

Sideroxylon lanuginosum

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Kemper Code: M830

Common Name: chittamwood

Zone: 6 to 10

Plant Type: Tree

Family: Sapotaceae

Missouri Native: Yes

Native Range: Southeastern United States, Mexico

Height: 15 to 45 feet

Spread: 10 to 30 feet

Bloom Time: June

Bloom Color: White

Sun: Full sun to part shade

Water: Dry to medium

Maintenance: Low

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Uses:

Hedge

Shade tree

Street tree

Flowering tree

Ground cover

Suitable as annual

Culinary herb

Vegetable

Water garden plant

Will naturalize

Wildlife:

Attracts birds

Attracts

hummingbirds

Attracts

butterflies

Flowers:

Has showy flowers

Has fragrant flowers

Flowers not showy

Good cut flower

Good dried flower

Leaves:

Leaves colorful

Leaves fragrant

Good fall color

Evergreen

Fruit:

Has showy fruit

Fruit edible

Other:

Winter interest

Thorns or spines

General Culture:

Grow in dry to medium moisture, well-drained soils in full sun to part shade. Winter hardiness is not well documented. It is therefore recommended that this species be planted in protected sites in the St. Louis area which is located at the far northern edge of this tree's natural growing range.

Noteworthy Characteristics:

Sideroxylon lanuginosum, commonly known as gum bumelia, woolly bumelia or woolly buckthorn, is a narrow-crowned, spiny, deciduous tree that typically grows 20 to 45' tall. It is native to the southeastern U.S. and northern Mexico north to Missouri. In Missouri, it occurs in dry or open rocky woods and glades in the southern 1/2 of the state south of the Missouri River. From Florida to Texas, it is also seen in moister soils along streams and swamps. Oblong-obovate leaves (to 3" long) are soft-hairy underneath and persist late into fall before turning an unexceptional yellow-green. Clusters of tiny white flowers appear in the leaf axils in early summer. Steyermark maintains that this is the last Missouri tree to flower other than the fall-flowering *Hamamelis virginiana* (witch hazel). Flowers give way to small, globular, shiny, slender-stalked fruits (to 1/2" long) which mature black in fall. Branches have sharp thorns reminiscent of osage-orange (*Maclura*). Cut wood exudes a milky sap. Bumelia is in the same family (Sapote) as the tropical sapodilla tree (*Manilkara zapota*) which is the source of the chicle used in chewing gum. *Lanuginosum* means "having soft, downy hairs", in reference to the hair on the leaf undersides and twigs of this species. Formerly known as *Bumelia lanuginosa*.

Problems:

No serious insect or disease problems.

Uses:

This tree has minimal ornamental value and is infrequently cultivated for landscape use. Moreover, it may be difficult to find at local nurseries. May be best utilized in wild areas, along property lines or in native plant gardens.

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