

BOG TUPELO

Nyssa ursina Small

Synonyms: none

Family: Nyssaceae (sour gum)

FNAI Ranks: G3/S3

Legal Status: US-none FL-none

Wetland Status: US-none+ FL-OBL



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Field Description: Deciduous shrub 1-3 m tall, with long flexuous stems branching from the base, each with many short shoots, often forming a zig-zag pattern. Stems re-sprout readily following fire. Leaves are elliptical, 3-6 cm long and 1-2 cm wide. Small greenish white flowers are borne at the ends of long stalks in the axils of the leaves, with pistillate and staminate flowers borne separately. Fruit is a round drupe less than 1 cm wide on a stem 0.5 to 2 cm long.

Similar Species: This species is distinguished from the closely related black gum (*N. sylvatica* var. *biflora*) by its round (vs oblong) fruit, generally shorter leaves up to 6 cm long (vs up to 14 cm long), and shrubby (vs tree-like) growth habit characterized by the absence of a leader shoot.

Related Rare Species: None

Habitat: Wet prairies, flatwoods, pond margins, and bogs.

bog tupelo

Nyssa ursina

Best Survey Season: Spring; April

Range-wide Distribution: Endemic to the Florida panhandle in Bay, Gulf, Franklin, and Liberty counties.

Conservation Status: Limited to open prairies and flatwoods, but tolerant of some silviculture disturbance. Long-term fire exclusion that allows excessive shading from the canopy is a threat to this species.

Protection and Management: Usually found growing with wiregrass in prairies and flatwoods, often on the edges of wetlands. Burn grassy flatwoods and prairies on a 2-3 year rotation with most fires performed during the early part of the growing season.

References: Burckhalter, R.E. 1992. The genus *Nyssa* (Cornaceae) in North America: a revision. *Sida* 15(2): 323-342. Small, J.K. 1927. A new *Nyssa* from Florida. *Torrey* 27: 92-93. Ward, D. B. 2008. Keys to the Flora of Florida-20. *Nyssa* (Nyssaceae) *Phytologia* 90(3): 318-323. Wunderlin, R.P. and Hansen B.F. 2011. Guide to the vascular plants of Florida. Third edition. University Press of Florida, Gainesville.