

Nyssa tree starts turning color early

Landscape Manager Rebecca Pollon periodically offers information on the trees in Rossmoor. Here, she tells about a tree that stands out for its early fall foliage:

One of the first trees to signal the start of autumn is *Nyssa sylvatica*, also known as black tupelo, beetlebung, Pepperidge or sour gum.

Nyssa is the name of the Greek water nymph. This tree will happily sop up water in boggy areas but is also surprisingly tolerant of drought once established.

Nyssa sylvatica is native to North America and can be found from Ontario, Canada, to Florida, where it is an important tree for honeybees and the honey production industry. The popular Tupelo honey is made using a close relative, the *Nyssa ogeche*.

What makes the *Nyssa* so desirable for Rossmoor, however, is the spectacular fall display. The bright, early autumn color is thought to attract migrating birds

to its fruit, which is exceptionally nutrient rich. The tree is especially enjoyed by the American robin, among many other small birds.

Look out for its rainbow of

colors on your next stroll around Rossmoor. *Nyssa* can be distinguished from other trees by its horizontal, gracefully tiered branches and large, ovate (oval with pointed tips) leaves.



The *Nyssa sylvatica* is one of the first trees that start turning color in the fall.

