

TECHNICAL NOTES

FOREST PRODUCTS LABORATORY

U. S. FOREST SERVICE

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"AMERICAN STORAX" FROM THE RED GUM TREE

A gum which is in demand by the manufacturers of perfumes, tobacco, adhesives, and pharmaceutical preparations, is produced by the red gum tree (*Liquidambar styraciflua*) of the South, though few owners of this tree apparently are yet aware that the gum has any commercial value. The properties and composition of this "sweet gum", as it is called, are similar to those of oriental storax, obtained from a tree (*Liquidambar orientalis*) which grows in Asia Minor. Cinnamic acid and cinnamic alcohol are two of its valuable components.

Because the war curtailed the supply of the imported product, the U. S. Forest Products Laboratory this season undertook some cooperative experiments to develop methods of gathering "sweet gum" or "American storax". Although the yield of gum from each tree is not large, a price of \$2 or more a pound has made its collection attractive to many individual operators, and a considerable quantity has been put on the market.

The laboratory experiments will be completed in November, and it is hoped that they will provide some cost data which will indicate to what extent "American storax" can profitably compete with the foreign product when normal conditions return.