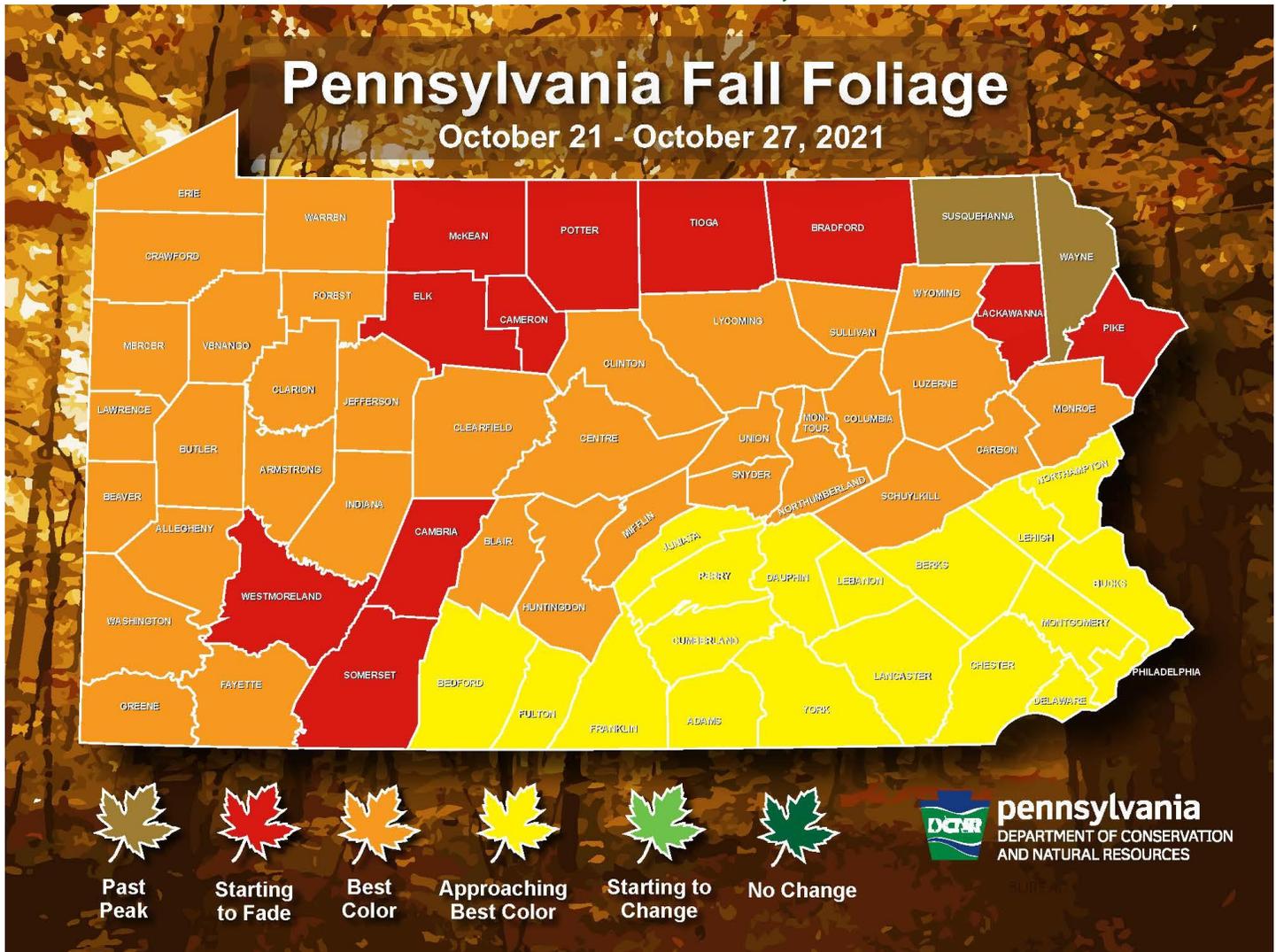


**Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources
Bureau of Forestry**

PENNSYLVANIA WEEKLY FALL FOLIAGE REPORT

October 21 – October 27, 2021



To predict peak season from the colors, use these guidelines:

- Dark Green/No Change= peak is *three weeks to a month* away
- Light Green/Starting to Change= peak is *approximately two to three weeks* away
- Yellow/Approaching Best Color= peak is *approximately one week* away
- Orange/Best Color= foliage is *peaking this week*
- Red/Starting to Fade= still some nice color but won't last more than *a few more days*
- Brown/Past Peak= all or nearly all color *is gone*

Statewide Fall Foliage Overview

The abrupt shift to cooler fall temperatures has stimulated a noticeable change across Pennsylvania's southern half. Although colors are fading in the northern tier of the commonwealth, the central Appalachians are just beginning to burst with color. This week will be optimal for widespread, vivid fall color in Pennsylvania, so don't miss it!

Northwestern Region

The manager in Cornplanter State Forest District (Warren, Erie counties) reported near-peak conditions across the region. Eastern Warren and Forest counties are further along but there is ample color throughout northwestern Pennsylvania. Some individual trees are showing truly vibrant colors, but yellow hues no longer dominate the landscape. The new mix of color includes orange, red, maroon, rust, and amber shades. Route 6 around Warren, Route 8, and Route 62 along the Allegheny River are popular scenic drives.

Northcentral Region



Gorgeous colors on Caledonia Pike, Moshannon State Forest. (photo by R. Conrad)

Foresters in Moshannon State Forest stated that foliage is still at peak but will begin fading by the end of the forecast period. Maples are holding good color but starting to lose leaves. Sassafras is bright yellow and orange, and black gum is displaying vivid red. Beeches are showing a nice yellow green, contrasting nicely with the still green oaks. A recommended drive is the entire length of Caledonia Pike from the village of Caledonia on Route 555 to Route 879 at Frenchville. Notable stops are the Shaggers Inn Shallow Water Impoundment at the intersection with Shaggers Inn Road and the Gifford Run Vista on Lost Run Road.

In Susquehannock State Forest (Potter, McKean counties), northern hardwoods are past peak. There is limited color on beech trees in some areas and oak is slowly changing. The best places to see color now are in the southern third of Potter County where there is a lot of oak. Scenic drives include routes 44 and 144 south from Carter Camp to Black Forest and Cross Fork, and Route 872 from Coudersport to Sinnemahoning.

The Clinton County service forester (Sproul State Forest) said the region is at peak this week. Oaks and hickories have yellowed across the mountains, but a fair amount of maple color was lost in recent wind and rain. Area travelers can see some nice autumn color at the Russell P. Letterman Wild Area near State Camp and Route 144.

In Tiadaghton State Forest, foresters said that the northern part of the district is at peak, with the middle and southern areas not far behind. While many northern hardwood leaves have already fallen, mixed oaks are contributing what is perhaps the best color of the season in some areas. Good color can be found along Bald Eagle Mountain south of Williamsport.

Foresters in Elk State Forest (Elk, Cameron counties) said heavy rains and wind knocked down many of the leaves over the weekend. Forests still have some oak color, but the district's forests are fading, overall.

The Tioga County service forester reported that foliage in Tioga State Forest is still highly variable, with some areas experiencing early leaf drop and lackluster color. Fall foliage sightseers are advised to stick to the ridgetop areas along Leetonia and Painter-Leetonia roads to see some nice color in stands of oak.

Forestry staff in Loyalsock State Forest reported past peak conditions for northern hardwoods in the northern part of the district (Bradford County). Oaks and beech are adding some pleasant color in Sullivan County and eastern Lycoming County. Route 87 is a recommended scenic drive in the region, or take a hike on Blessing Mountain near Jacoby Falls.

West-central and Southwestern Regions

The service forester for Venango and Clarion counties (Clear Creek Forest District) said that over the last several days, dropping temperatures have "kicked fall color into full gear." Many early changing species are past peak and have dropped most of their leaves, but widespread oak forests are transitioning to shades of red, orange, and russet. Good options to see fall colors include Brady's Bend Overlook (Clarion County), Seneca Fire Tower at Cook Forest State Park, Beartown Rocks, and Kennerdell Overlook. Area forests are currently at peak stage but will decline in color by late in the forecast period.



(L) Buffalo Creek, Armstrong County. (R) Seneca Fire Tower, Cook Forest State Park. (photos by H. May)

The Cambria County service forester (Gallitzin State Forest District) reported past peak conditions in higher elevations of the Babcock Division to the southeast of Johnstown. In the lower elevations near Altoona, leaf change has been slow, but recent cold has driven a rapid transition in birch, poplar, beech, and hickory. The widespread red oaks of the Rager Mountain Division northwest of Johnstown should provide some nice color toward the end of the month.

In the higher elevations of Forbes State Forest District, many northern hardwood species are declining in color or have lost leaves, but oaks are changing to scarlet, yellow, and orange. Visitors to Keystone State Park in Westmoreland County will be excited by the colors surrounding Keystone Lake. Route 381 from Ligonier to Farmington provides

beautiful, rural views of fields and forest. A visit to Ohiopyle State Park will offer unforgettable views of the Youghiogheny River and forested hillsides with their best fall colors. Laurel Hill State Park in Somerset county will continue to show peak color early this week; but don't delay, colors will fade here quickly. Overall color is fading throughout much of Somerset County.

On Chestnut Ridge and to the west, above-normal early October temperatures and a lack of frost have kept leaves surprisingly green, but maples, birches, cherry, and hickory are displaying beautiful splashes of color across the area.

Central and Southcentral Regions

Weiser State Forest staff reported conditions nearing peak as early color from birch, black gum, maple, and sassafras can still be seen across the region, with newly colorful oaks adding to the display. Expect to see the majority of oaks displaying yellow, orange, and crimson throughout the district as the new week begins. An event to see scenic fall color is the Roaring Creek Tract Drive Through on Sunday in Columbia and Northumberland counties.

In Bald Eagle State Forest, Centre County, foresters reported good color in most of the area. The next few weeks should mark a shift in color from species like maples and birches to oak, hickory, sassafras, and witch hazel, to round out the fall foliage season. For those who like to drive while sightseeing, now is a great time. Most of the forest roads have been showing great color in the canopy and understory. A recommended foliage destination for scenery and color is in and around Poe Valley State Park. Peak color is expected to arrive in the region by early next week.

The Union, Mifflin, and Snyder County service forester (Bald Eagle State Forest District) indicated peak conditions in the region. Birches have dropped most of their leaves, but most tulip poplars are yellow. Sugar maples and hickories are showing bright yellow to orange. Most black gums are reddish, and red maples are turning. Many oaks have begun the transition, although most remain mostly green. Beautiful foliage drives in the area include routes 45, 192, 104, and 235. For a fantastic fall hike full of color, take the White Mountain Ridge Trail (near Weikert) for a tour through the Penns Creek Wild Area.



Beautiful colors from Penns View Vista. (photo by C. Neuffer)

Foresters in Rothrock State Forest said the best leaf color is beginning now and will likely continue through next week. Oaks have finally begun to change in many areas, which will bring out pleasant color on hillsides across central PA. Many other species are still retaining brilliant foliage too. This weekend should be the best chance to catch a glimpse of this yearly spectacle since the long-term weather forecast is calling for cloudy, wet weather for the latter part of the month. Ridgetop vistas make great places to observe the maximum amount of color, but beauty will be found everywhere in the forest this week.



The view from a vista on Pennsylvania Furnace Road. (photo by J. Thompson)



Fall color along Route 850, Perry County. (photo by L. Book)

The Perry County service forester (Tuscarora State Forest) reported that oaks are still green but bright colors can be seen in birch, hickory, and maples. Views along stream valleys show nice color contrast with hemlocks. The ridges and valleys around Tuscarora State Forest are currently showing good color, but the next two weeks will get even better for fall foliage in the district.

In Buchanan State Forest, maples and birches are showing their brightest yellows. Peak conditions are about a week away. A drive down Aughwick Road along the Franklin/Fulton County line from U.S. Route 30 to Burnt Cabins is a great option see fall color. Near the southern end of the route, be sure to stop along Tower Road for an excellent vista view. Many hiking trails also cross Aughwick Road, offering opportunities for scenic fall treks.

A drive down Bark Road in the Sideling Hill Division (Fulton County) is over 10 miles and accesses several vistas and a picnic area at the north end. Another option in the district offering a similar experience is a drive down Blankley and Martin Hill roads in the Chaneyville Division (Bedford County), where a vista and the Blankley Picnic Area await.



Bright colors on Martin Hill, Chaneyville Division, Buchanan State Forest. (photo by K. Naugle)



Mount Hope Road, Michaux State Forest. (photo by J. Schwartzer)

The Cumberland/Franklin County service forester serving Michaux State Forest indicated that peak color is seven to ten days away in the region. Black gums are beginning to fade, but in many areas, poplar, hickories, red maple, witch hazel, sassafras, dogwoods, and birch are approaching full color. Oaks are also transitioning, with northern portions of the district showing more color than the south.

Ridge Road from Black Gap Road to Stillhouse Hollow Road provides a pretty birch show. The Strawberry Hill/Mount Hope Road area in the southeastern corner of Michaux State Forest offers a multiple use trail system through large stands of poplars showing great shades of yellow.

Northeastern Region

The Pike and Monroe County service forester (Delaware State Forest) said the best fall colors can be seen in the Monroe County portion of the district. Good fall color can also be found in areas that received less rain and wind over the last few days. Fall color in Pike County is diminishing. The best fall colors can be viewed from Big Pocono State Park and along Blue Mountain.



Fall hues from the Pohopoco Fire Tower, Delaware State Forest. (photo by R. Rutan)

Foresters in Pinchot State Forest reported that Susquehanna and northern Wayne County forests are past peak and mostly leafless, except for oaks. Leaves in southern Wayne and Lackawanna counties are starting to fade. Wyoming County is still at peak but will start to fade over the next week. Luzerne County forests are peaking, a condition expected to persist throughout next week. Species in full color are red maple, black gum, sassafras, white and red oaks, birches, beech, and aspens. Fall foliage destinations in the region include Moon Lake Recreation Area, Crystal Lake and Montage tracts; and Francis Slocum, Nescopeck, and Hickory Run State parks.

Southeastern Region



The Berks and Chester County service forester (William Penn State Forest District) said the region's forests are still very green due to unseasonably warm weather, which has significantly stalled progress. However, one can spot slight color on maples, birch, and understory species like spicebush. Oak and poplar have been slow to turn. Attractive fall color can be found on the Wertz Tract on Texter Mountain in Berks County. Peak color in the area is at least 10 days away.

Vivid color from a white ash near Harrisburg. (photo by R. Reed)