

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

Northwestern Region



The district manager in Cornplanter State Forest (based in Warren County) reported that the colors of fall are on full display. Hickories are displaying their warm, golden hue, contrasting with the crimson of black gum. The orange/yellow mix of sugar maples is also standing out against the dark russet from the oaks. Some leaves have fallen, but there is plenty of color to enjoy in area woodlands. Some corridors to observe fall colors include Route 8 from Barkeyville north into Erie County, Route 6 through Erie and Warren counties, US 322 beginning in Crawford County and heading east toward Clarion, and along the Allegheny River on Route 62 north of Oil City toward Warren.

Warren County forests are popping with color. (photo by C. Stelter)



Cornplanter Hill near Oil City, Venango County. (photo by T. Ryan)

Northcentral Region

Staff in Tiadaghton State Forest said much green remains on the mountainsides, but fall color is progressing. Sugar maple, birch, sassafras, black gum, walnut, and hickory are showing their colors mainly on the mountaintops, but red maples, oaks, and beech have just begun to turn. Mountaintop roads are the best corridors to see the striking colors, currently. A hike on the George Wills Ski Trail would offer some pretty views as well. The Pine Creek Rail Trail will also present a scenic walking or bike riding venue through the changing scenery.



Bull Run Road, Tiadaghton State Forest. (photo by V. Curtis)

Staff in Susquehannock State Forest (Potter, McKean, Cameron counties) reported northern hardwood forests are nearly bare, with a few red maples, bright yellow birches, and beech still showing some color. Northern Potter County is past peak. There is a distinctive difference in the northern hardwood forest versus the oak ridges, which are approaching best color. The best areas in the region for viewing autumn shades are Route 44 south of Cherry Springs State Park and Route 872 south of Wharton.

Foresters in Loyalsock State Forest (serving Lycoming, Sullivan, Bradford counties) reported peak foliage throughout the district, with gorgeous shades of yellows and oranges, especially in the northern half of the district. Oak stands are still green, and many maples have lost their leaves last week. Some maple leaves are still hanging on, showing off their reds and golds. A slow drive to High Knob Overlook or a hike along Angel Falls Trail will show vivid autumn color.



Beautiful fall shades at High Knob Overlook, Loyalsock State Forest. (photo by J. Jordan)



The Elk County service forester said the Clermont and East Branch regions are starting to fade, but some oak forests are approaching best color. Remaining red maple and birch foliage is currently most vibrant. Wykoff Run and Red Run are scenic now, and the Fred Woods Trail is still a pretty hike.

Vibrant colors at Bucktail Path off Hunts Run, Elk State Forest. (photo by S. Johnson)



Stark contrast between the oak forest and northern hardwoods (right) from Water Tank Vista along Route 44. (photo by N. Confer)

The Tioga County service forester said the state forest is still exhibiting best color. Impressive colors can be seen on northern hardwoods as orange, red, and yellow have filled the mountain landscape. Red maples are still beautiful while oaks remain mostly green. Any drive in the region will reveal beautiful foliage, but the eastern half of the county is slightly fading. A recommended drive is along the west rim of the PA Grand Canyon along Colton, Painter Leetonia, and West Rim roads. In the same area, a suggested hike is on the northern half of West Rim Trail. Good color is still expected later into the fall foliage season with oaks yet to peak.

West-central and Southwestern Regions

Foresters in Forbes State Forest reported peak fall color continues across higher elevations. Red and sugar maples are at peak color throughout the Laurel Highlands and showing bright splashes across the lower elevations of southwestern Pennsylvania. Many maples, birches, and black cherries are shedding their leaves, with the spotlight shifting from these species to oaks that are beginning to show shades of yellow and russet. Tulip poplar and American beech are turning bright yellow, as well. Visit Linn Run State Park to enjoy the bright colors along Linn Run Road. Laurel Hill State Park in Somerset County will continue to provide some of the best opportunities to enjoy fall color this week. Any country road throughout the Laurel Highlands offers a chance to enjoy the beautiful hillsides. Route 381 from Ligonier to Farmington is a beautiful drive through the countryside of Westmoreland and Fayette counties. Along the way, be sure to visit Ohiopyle State Park, where beautiful vistas, scenic hikes, and abundant wildlife can be found.

The Mercer/Lawrence County service forester (Clear Creek State Forest District) indicated the area lost some leaves last week because of heavy rain, but there is still plenty of foliage and color. The region is approaching best color with maples putting on a fine show of yellow, orange, and red. Oaks are changing in a few areas, and there is still color on birch, aspen, walnut, and elm. Peak for the region is expected on about 10/18.



Mercer County is alight with color. (photo by D. Cole)

Central and Southcentral Regions



Pleasant color at Lost Turkey Trail trailhead. (photo by L. Findley)

Gallitzin State Forest staff (Indiana, Cambria, Blair counties) reported area forests are approaching best color, but leaves seem to be falling fast. Maples are at peak and cherries have begun to fade. Oaks are still very green but provide a nice contrast with the brighter shades. A hike on the Lost Turkey Trail is a great way to experience the beauty of the season.

The Schuylkill/Carbon County (Weiser State Forest District) service forester indicated Carbon, Columbia, Northumberland, Montour, and Schuylkill Counties are approaching best color, with Lebanon and Dauphin counties lagging. In Dauphin and Lebanon counties, black gum, birch, maple, tulip poplar, aspen, walnut, and sassafras are starting to display yellow and red fall colors. Carbon County is showing color in the same species as well as some interesting hues on cinnamon fern, Virginia creeper, dogwood, and witch hazel. Some oaks are dropping leaves but are mostly green, otherwise. The Roaring Creek and Haldeman

tracts are great options to view fall colors. Hickory Run and Lehigh Gorge State parks are recommended for pleasant foliage viewing in Carbon County. Peak color is expected on approximately October 22 for the northern half of the district.



The view from Mauch Chunk fire tower, Jim Thorpe area. (photo by W. Thomas)

The Juniata/Perry County service forester (Tuscarora State Forest District) said the area is approaching best color, with maples, hickories, and poplars decorating the mountainsides. Oaks are still green but now is a good time to view fall foliage before the expected rain brings down many leaves. Several gated roads are open now on state forest lands and offer convenient access to scenic vistas.

In Bald Eagle State Forest, the Union, Snyder, and Mifflin County service forester said the region's woods are approaching best color. Black gum is vibrant and red maple, sassafras, sumac, and hickory are transitioning. Oaks are still holding green. Brush Hollow Trail (Centre/Union County) and Little Mountain Trail (Snyder County) are recommended to view some great autumn sights.



*Licking Creek Drive, Tuscarora State Forest, Juniata County.
(photo by L. Book)*

The Huntingdon County (Rothrock State Forest) service forester indicated that foliage continues to progress, and bright colors are starting to show in the northern portions of the district. While most oaks are still holding green in Huntingdon County, some are beginning to change to the north in Centre County. Other hardwoods such as birch, maple, hickory, and black gum are vibrant and

displaying peak color. Because these species are not dominant, green oak leaves are most prominent across the landscape. Huntingdon County colors are mixed with a few pockets of good color, but peak is still roughly two weeks away. The best places to see some colorful foliage this weekend will be on ridgetops and areas where there is a greater component of maple and birch trees. Nice color can be observed on the northern stretches of the Mid-State Trail and Raystown Lake.



Warm colors at Hairy Johns Picnic Area, Bald Eagle State Forest. (photo by J. Bausinger)



Foresters in Buchanan State Forest said Bedford, Fulton, and Franklin counties are still in the beginning stages of change, however, the currently colder pattern should spur a quick and noticeable change within the next two weeks. Black gums are showing brilliant, crimson-red leaves, and birch, hickory, and maple are emanating yellow and gold. Routes 522, 915, 75, and US 220 and 30 are recommended for some pleasant views of autumn scenery.

Vibrant forest edge at Buchanan State Forest Resource Management Center near McConnellsburg. (photo by K. Ewan)



Raystown Lake at Entiken. (photo by J. Thompson)



Vivid black gum. (photo by Z. Miller)

Moshannon State Forest staff reported best color in Clearfield County forests. Red/sugar maple, black gum, sassafras, sweet birch, and ferns are displaying full color. Oaks are showing some yellow and red, as well. Suggested drives to see the fall color in Centre County are State Beaver and Strawband Beaver roads. In Clearfield County, suggested paved routes are Route 879 and the Quehanna Highway. State Forest Roads in Clearfield County with the best color are Caledonia Pike, Medix Grade, and Jack Dent roads. Rain and wind this weekend could cause many leaves to fall, so don't wait to experience the fall scenery.

The Clinton County service forester (Sproul State Forest District) said the region has entered best color. Maples are at full red on the ridges and tulip poplars are bright yellow. The lower slopes are a little behind the ridges, but recent cold nights should help the transition throughout the district.

Staff in Michaux State Forest said regional woods are still in the early stages of color development. Ridge Road offers a good, early dose of fall color.



View from Beech Creek Road, Sproul State Forest. (photo by L. Greenaway)

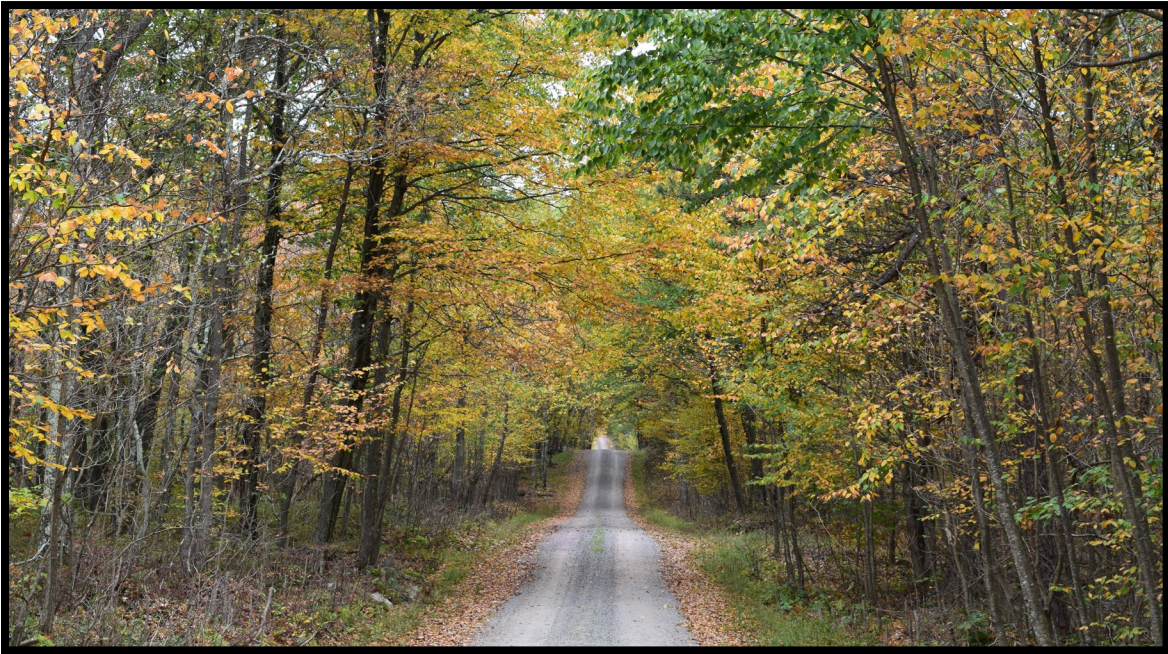
Forestry staff at the Mira Lloyd Dock Resource Management Center (Centre County) said a drive on Route 45 showed a remarkable color shift in the valley as the oak species are catching up to the northern hardwoods. Peak conditions began during the latter part of the last forecast period and should continue into next week. Suggested destinations to admire the vibrant shades are Poe Paddy, Poe Valley, Penn-Roosevelt, or Reeds Gap State parks.



Irrigation pond at Penn Nursery, Spring Mills. (photo by C. Neufer)

Northeastern Region

The Luzerne/Lackawanna County service forester (Pinchot State Forest District) said cooler temperatures have pushed vivid color in most areas, but many leaves that peaked last week have since fallen off the trees due to high winds. Patches of warm colors from oak and American beech in the northern part of the district are still adorning the landscape. Sweet birch, witch-hazel, and hickory are adding bright yellow throughout the rest of the district. Various shades of red can be seen in red maples and blueberry, with sassafras adding a mix of yellow, orange, and red to the understory of mixed oak forest, which is still mostly green. A great way to experience the beauty of the season is to hike to the Pine Hill Vista in the Thornhurst Tract.



Pinchot State Forest road to Pine Hill Vista. (photo by J. Maza)



Sassafras Road, Thornhurst Tract, Pinchot State Forest. (photo by J. Maza)



View at Merli Sarnoski Park, Lackawanna County. (photo by J. Maza)

The Pike/Monroe County service forester (Delaware State Forest District) said the region's forests are entering a period of high variability based on elevation and exposure; much of the forest has not yet peaked and is still approaching best color. Exposed areas with slightly more pronounced elevation or weather exposure may be peaking within this forecast period while lower elevations with less exposure are still in the beginning stages. Red maple is exhibiting a vibrant red and ash is displaying bright yellow/orange. Black gum has become bright red and sweet birch is sporting vivid yellow. Recommended destinations for great fall color are the Stairway Wild Area (particularly close to the river), Tobyhanna Lake, Peck's Pond, and Promised Land Lake.



View at Rod Flad Memorial Park. (photo by L. Goddard)

Southeastern Region



The Bucks/Lehigh County service forester (William Penn State Forest District) indicated that the region's foliage transition has been slow, but recent cold nights could stimulate noticeable changes. Black gum, tulip poplar, sweet birch, dogwood, and sumac are contributing color throughout the area. The large trail system at the Trexler Nature Preserve in Schnecksville is suggested for some glimpses of early color. Peak color for the region is still two to three weeks out.

Sweet birches are adding a warm yellow shade throughout southeastern forests. (photo by J. Nissen)