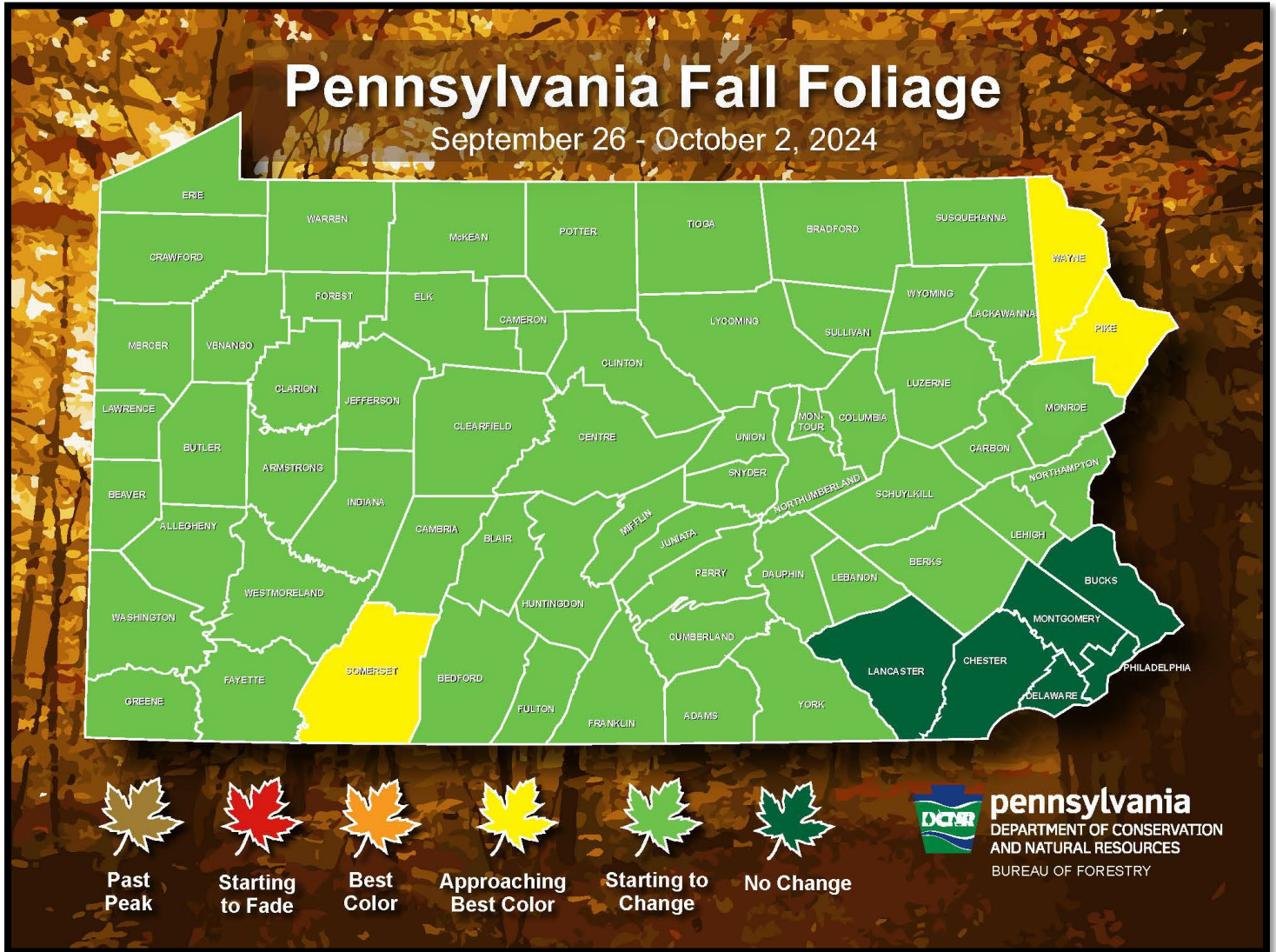


**Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources  
Bureau of Forestry**

**PENNSYLVANIA WEEKLY FALL FOLIAGE REPORT  
September 26 – October 2, 2024**



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

- Dark Green/Little to 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

After several periods of dryness during the growing season, much-needed summer/early fall rains helped stave off premature leaf drop, keeping forest canopies green. Cold nights, coupled with prevailing dry conditions during late August and early September stimulated noticeable color changes throughout Penn's Woods. Fall foliage viewers should expect a vibrant season that arrives sooner and lasts for a slightly shorter period compared to recent years.

## Northwestern Region



*Bright colors are just starting on this sassafras. (photo by C. Stelter)*

The district manager in Cornplanter State Forest (representing Warren, Crawford, and Erie counties) said “as if to welcome the first day of fall”, colors are changing in the woods of northwestern Pennsylvania. Initial colors seem to be mainly red and light yellow. Individual red maple trees stand out as they display their bright reds, as well as the darker reds of the bush varieties of dogwood. Many fall wildflowers, especially goldenrods and asters, are providing early color and enhancing the beauty of the landscape. Fall colors are currently most evident in the understory and along roads and fields.

## Northcentral Region

Foresters in Elk State Forest said area forests are just beginning to change. Sassafras, black gum, and spotty red maples are species showing attractive color, currently. The East Branch and Clermont areas are recommended for best viewing. Peak foliage is expected in approximately three weeks.



*Mosaic of early fall color near Warren. (photo by C. Stelter)*



*Fall colors are just beginning in Elk State Forest (Ridge Road). (photo by S. Johnson)*

The Clinton County service forester said Sproul State Forest is beginning to show fall shades. Sassafras and maple are yellow and red, contrasting nicely with oaks that are dark green. The most colorful drive in the area is along Route 144 from Snow Shoe to Renovo.

The Tioga County service forester reported the region's forests are beginning to change. Eastern and western parts of the county are exhibiting more color overall, with reds from red maple and sumac and yellows from sugar maple and birch. Recommended areas to visit are Armenia Mountain, Lambs Lookout, or County Bridge Picnic Area. Downtown Wellsboro and surrounding areas are showing some pleasant autumn hues, as well.



*Pleasant color along Loyalsock Creek. (photo by J. Jordan)*

Foresters in Loyalsock State Forest (Lycoming, Sullivan, Bradford counties) indicated that the transition to fall color has begun. Red and sugar maple, birch, hickories, and sumac are displaying some bright colors while oaks are still green. Most state forest roads will give an early fall “sneak peek” as some maples are shedding leaves, augmenting the slight change in the foliage. Peak is expected in the region during the third week of October.

Foresters in Susquehannock State Forest, primarily serving Potter and McKean counties, reported that area forests are transitioning to fall colors, with red maple, sugar maple, and birches brightening the roadsides. Route 6 through Potter County is a recommended drive to observe some early fall scenery.



*Early color along a vista on Francis Road, Tiadaghton State Forest. (photo by J. Jeffries)*

Staff in Tiadaghton State Forest reported that district forests are just beginning to change. The majority of Lycoming County is green with a few scattered yellows and orange leaves on sassafras, birches, and some maples. A hike on the Baldwin Point Ski Trail is recommended to observe some warm fall scenery. Most of the district is expected to peak around the second to third week in October.



*View from Eagleton Rd., Grugan Township, Clinton County. (photo by L. Greenaway)*



*Cherry Springs Vista, Potter County. (photo by D. Aguirre)*



*Moshannon State Forest is still mostly green with some pops of bright color. (photo by C. Gulvas)*

Foresters in Moshannon State Forest District said red maples are just beginning to turn yellow with some displaying a reddish tint. Birches are yellowing and sassafras and black gum are yellow/orange, contrasting nicely with oaks, which are still green. Best regional color can be found along the Quehanna Highway from Medix Run to Karthaus, where you are likely to see some elk this time of year as well. Peak color is expected in two to three weeks.

### **West-central and Southwestern Regions**

The Armstrong/Beaver/Butler County service forester (Clear Creek State Forest District) said forests in the district are beginning to change. Virginia creeper vines are bright red and spicebush shrubs are beginning to turn yellow. Many red maple and black gum trees are well into their fall color transition, showcasing vibrant reds and oranges. Foresters in Jefferson and Clarion counties report that birches are beginning to turn yellow in the otherwise green oak forests. With plenty of fields filled with goldenrods and asters and maple lined forest edges, you're sure to experience some seasonal color on a drive to M.K. Goddard State Park in Mercer County. Peak throughout most of district is expected in the next two to three weeks.



*Beartown Rocks, Clear Creek State Forest on 9/21/24. (photo by C. Goodwin)*

Foresters in Forbes State Forest said the unique growing season in southwestern Pennsylvania has fall color progressing more rapidly and earlier compared to recent years. Fall color development is estimated to be a week or more ahead of recent years. Black gum, the perennial “leadoff hitter” for fall color, is at peak or past peak across the ridges of the Laurel Highlands. Its beautiful shades of bright red to burgundy signal the start of the fall foliage season. With all southwestern Pennsylvania experiencing some level of drought, we can expect earlier than normal fall color and accelerated leaf drop, especially on shallow rooted and less drought tolerant trees like birches, black cherry, maples, and yellow poplar. Yellow birch, black birch, and yellow poplar are at their best golden yellows this week. Some of these trees have already dropped their leaves due to recent rain and wind. Drought tolerant oaks have shown minimal fall color, and their foliage will be less impacted by dry conditions. Don’t delay visiting a nearby park or forest to take in the beauty of fall. Visitors interested in traveling to Mt. Davis, the highest point in Pennsylvania (elevation 3,213 ft), should not delay their trip as this area will be the earliest to show peak fall color. A drive on the country roads of Somerset County will



*Early maple color near Gallitzin State Forest. (photo by J. Vinglas)*

provide beautiful color, with much of the county experiencing peak or near peak fall color this week. A visit to the Blue Hole Division in Forbes State Forest will provide beautiful views of red and sugar maples glowing with shades of yellow, orange, and red. Jones Mill Run Road is another Forbes State Forest drive sure to please fall foliage enthusiasts. Visit Laurel Hill State Park for beautiful fall views reflected in Laurel Hill Lake.

Foresters in Gallitzin State Forest (representing Indiana, Blair, and Cambria counties) said area woods are in the early stages of color change. Black gum, Virginia creeper, red maple, and sugar maples are just starting to turn color. Gallitzin State Forest offers great fall foliage viewing opportunities from three vistas, one accessible by car, and the others, within a quarter mile of state forest roads.



*Bright fall color along Cole Run Road, Forbes State Forest. (photo by D. Planinsek)*

### **Central and Southcentral Regions**

The Perry County service forester (Tuscarora State Forest District) said woodland edges are starting to change in the ridge and valley region of southcentral PA. Goldenrods are yellow and some color is starting in black walnut, maples, and poplars. Peak color is expected around the end of October.



Staff in Michaux State Forest (representing Cumberland, Franklin, Adams counties) said area forests are beginning to change with some colorful black gums. Peak is expected in about three weeks. A drive to Dark Hollow Vista via Ridge Road is recommended for some pleasant early viewing.



*Bright black gums along Ridge Road near Big Pine Flat. (photo by Michaux State Forest staff)*

Early signs of change have appeared across the landscape in Bald Eagle State Forest (Snyder, Union, Centre, Mifflin counties). Many trees are beginning to shift from their summer hues, hinting at the vibrant colors to come. Several species are already beginning to showcase their autumn shades, with black gum showing its striking red and purple leaves. Additionally, birch and locust species are starting to show their warm, golden tones. Other species to watch for include sassafras, red maple, dogwood, and Virginia creeper. With over 300 miles of state forest roads and more than 20 vistas, the district makes a great venue for a forest drive. The region will reach peak color around mid- to late October.

Foresters in Buchanan State Forest (representing Fulton, Bedford, Franklin counties) said forests in the region have just begun changing. Black gums are showing a bold crimson hue, with maples and hickories contributing shades of yellow. A visit to any of the four district picnic areas will provide some early glimpses of fall color. Peak foliage is expected in mid-October.



*Black gum trees showing some early color on Cooper Mill Road in Union County. (photo by D. Smith)*

The Schuylkill/Carbon County (Weiser State Forest District) service forester indicated that foliage in the region is in early stages of transition. Notable species to watch for include black gum, sweet birch, red maple, and huckleberry. Visitors to the region should visit the Penn Forest Tract, Hickory Run State Park, or the Roaring Creek Tract to see some pleasant, early color. Farther south in Dauphin and Lebanon counties, bright colors are evident along drier forest edges with sumac, walnut, and a few maples decorating the countryside.

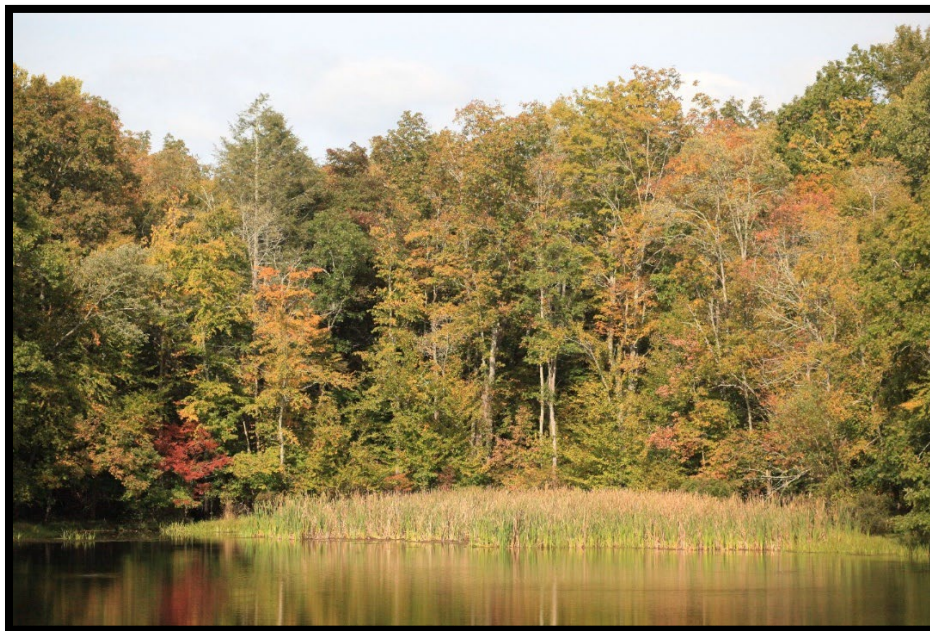
The Rothrock State Forest District (Huntingdon, Centre, Mifflin counties) Ranger said foliage is beginning to change in the area. Patches of lighter green and yellow are evident. Primary species showing the most color include black birch, black walnut, tulip poplar, red maple, and sugar maple. Fall color is inconsistent, but a drive on Seeger Road near the Greenwood fire tower will reveal some yellow birch stands. The region's peak is expected in mid- to late October.

Forestry staff at the Mira Lloyd Dock Resource Conservation Center (Penn Nursery) in Spring Mills said central Pennsylvania is in the early stages of foliage change. Dominant species in transition are the members of our maple, birch, and hickory families. These species are showing reds and yellows while black gum and sassafras are toward the end of their color spectrum, showing deep red and vibrant orange hues. A cruise along Poe Paddy Drive will reveal some warm, early fall color. Foliage is expected to peak in the area during the second to third weeks of October.

## Northeastern Region

Foresters in Pinchot State Forest District (serving Luzerne, Lackawanna, Wyoming, Susquehanna, and Wayne counties) said the entire district is showing early signs of the fall transition. Wayne County is furthest along with northern hardwoods contributing impressive color. The Moosic Mountain Tract and the northernmost state parks in the district, including Salt Springs, Lackawanna, and Archbald Pothole, are suggested places to see some early color. Peak color is expected in the latter half of October across most of the district.

The Pike/Monroe County service forester (Delaware State Forest District) reported that forests in the region have begun to change, with some parts of the district showing more progress. Species showing nice color include red maple and sweet birch. Recommended places to visit include Peck's Pond, Lake Wallenpaupack, Stairway Wild Area, and Ron Flad Park. The region is expected to peak during the third week of October.



*Current foliage conditions at Ron Flad Park. (photo by L. Goddard)*

## Southeastern Region

Foresters in William Penn State Forest District (southeastern counties) reported a prevailing designation of “no change”. A few species are currently showing a bit of color, including dogwoods, black birch, and tulip poplar. For a look at some early autumn tones, fall foliage enthusiasts should consider a visit to the Trexler Nature Preserve near Schnecksville in Lehigh County.