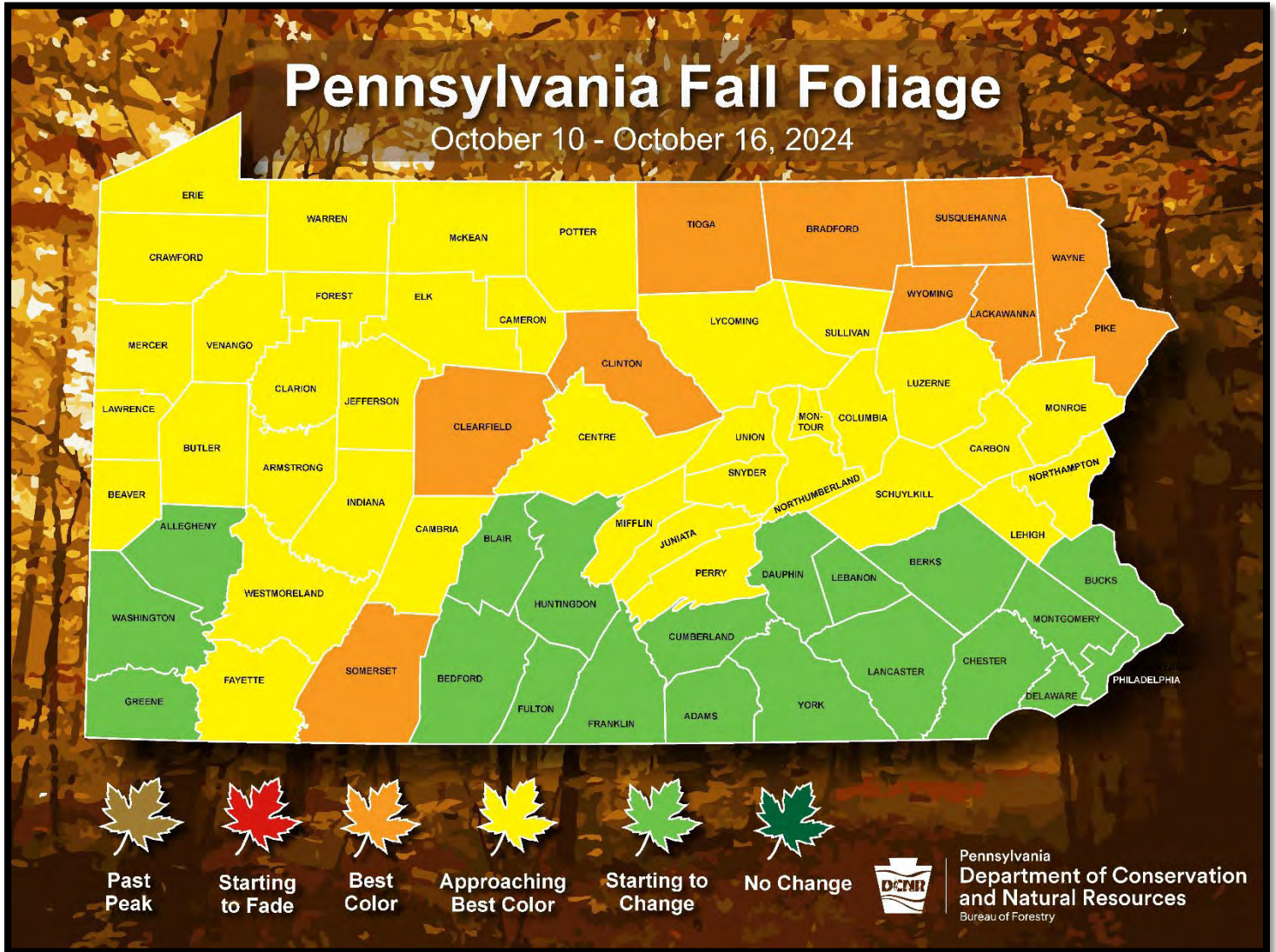


Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources
Bureau of Forestry

PENNSYLVANIA WEEKLY FALL FOLIAGE REPORT

October 10 – October 16, 2024



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

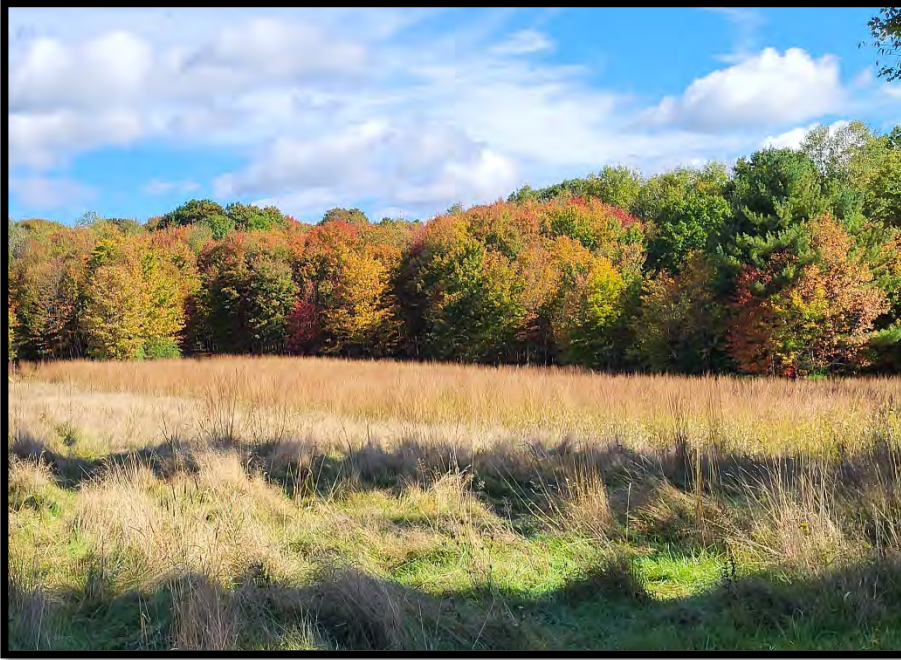
- Dark Green/Little to No Change= peak is *three weeks to a month* away
- Light Green/Starting to Change= peak is *approximately two to three weeks* away
- Yellow/Approaching Best Color= peak is *approximately one week* away
- Orange/Best Color= foliage is *peaking this week*
- Red/Starting to Fade= 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

This week's marked drop in nightly temperatures has accelerated the transition of color in Penn's Woods. Vibrant shades can be found throughout the northeastern, northcentral, northwestern, central, and southwestern portions of the Commonwealth. Vivid autumn color is now prevalent from the northern Poconos to the central Appalachians and throughout the Allegheny Plateau.

Northwestern Region

The district manager in Cornplanter State Forest District (serving Warren, Crawford, Erie counties) reported a stormfront last weekend brought some leaves down, but it also ushered in cooler night temperatures, which has encouraged the development of fall colors in northwestern PA. Hickories are displaying their warm golden hue, contrasted with the



Pretty fall scenery near Tionesta. (photo by T. Ryen)

crimson color of black gum. Other contributors to the fall scenery include an orange/yellow mix on sugar maples and dark russet and rich browns on oak trees. With sunny days in the forecast, it should be a great weekend and upcoming week to get out to your favorite state forest or state park to enjoy the bountiful colors of fall.

Routes 6, 8, and 27 are popular scenic drives in the northwest, and Route 62 along the Allegheny River never disappoints. Consider avoiding main routes to travel some back roads and enjoy the beautiful foliage of PA, where local farmers markets offer much more to the experience of a fall road trip in northwestern Pennsylvania.



Beautiful autumn color near Waterford, Erie County. (photo by S. Laskowski)

Northcentral Region



Elk Run Vista, Tioga State Forest. (photo by T. Oliver)

The Tioga County service forester said the region's forests are now at peak foliage. Some red maples are showing a beautiful red, but the most vibrant shades are yellow/gold contributed by sugar maple, beech, and birch. The Wellsboro and PA Grand Canyon areas are beautiful now.

Foresters in Elk State Forest indicated that leaves are rapidly changing in the district. Overall, the district is approaching best color with peak approximately one week away. Black birch, red maple, sassafras, black gum, and hickory are glowing with fall color. Oaks are still mostly green but showing signs of change. Suggested drives to enjoy the autumn scenery include the Quehanna Highway, Red Run, and Mason Hill Road with a stop at the Bucktail Overlook.

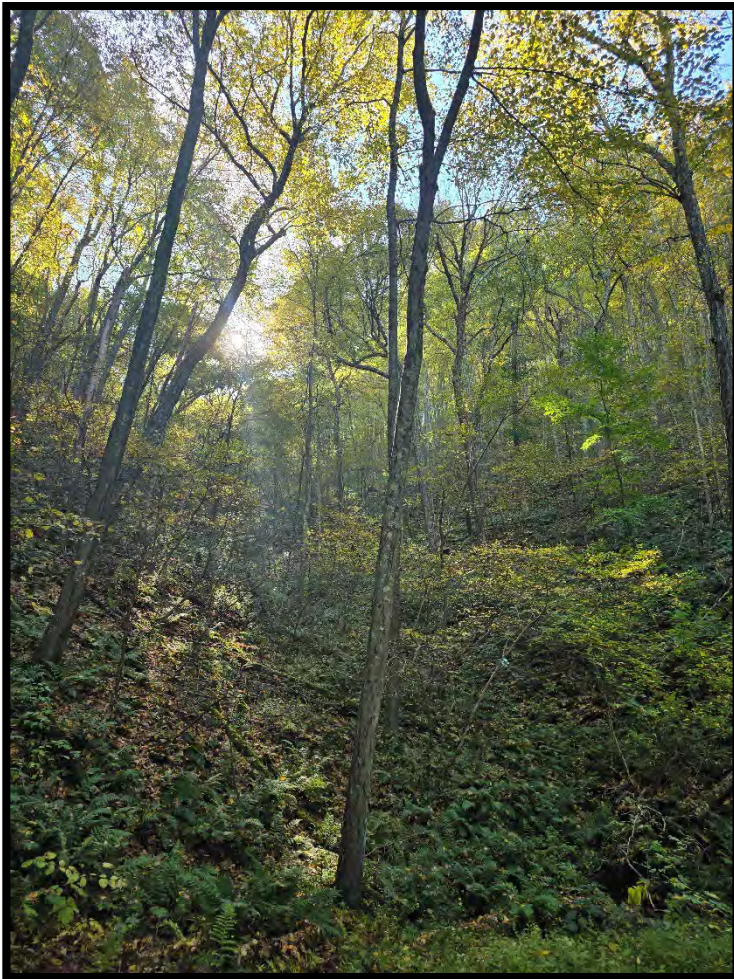
Foresters in Susquehannock State Forest (Potter, McKean counties) reported the area is approaching best color. Maples are standing out with bright color. Routes 6 and 44 are recommended drives for scenic views.

Foresters in Tiadaghton State Forest (serving Lycoming County) said the region is approaching best color. Most tree species across the district are yellow, and sassafras are orange or red. The oaks district-wide are beginning to exhibit a yellow tint with a more prominent yellow in northern Lycoming County and southern Potter County. A suggested destination for a picturesque hike on the state forest is the Golden Eagle Trail.

Foresters in Loyalsock State Forest (serving Sullivan, Bradford, and eastern Lycoming counties) indicated that the entire district is colorful now. Most areas are approaching best color, and some will be at peak in the upcoming week. Oak stands are coming on more slowly but adding warm shades, as well. Several species are showing some gold and browns, accentuating the abundant bright red tones. Cherries and maples have already begun to lose their leaves for the season. A hike on the Loyalsock Trail is sure to please fall foliage enthusiasts.



Fall color at the Loyalsock State Forest Resource Management Center in Dushore. (photo by J. Jordan)



The Clinton County service forester serving Sproul State Forest District reported that forests in the region will be at peak by the weekend. Vibrant color can be seen on birches, sassafras, and sugar maple. The best places to view the color are generally ridgetop locations, routes 44 and 144, and state forest vistas. Trees in the valley and along Route 120 are changing but are not as advanced as those at elevation. Weekend visitors to the area should consider attending the Flaming Fall Foliage Festival in Renovo.

Gorgeous autumn color at Kingston Road, Grugan Township, Clinton County. (photo by L. Greenaway)



View at Little Lyman Vista, Potter County. (photo by N. Confer)



View from the Tiadaghton State Forest District office. (photo by J. Jeffries)



Bucktail Path, northern Cameron County. (photo by S. Johnson)

West-central and Southwestern Regions

The Armstrong/Beaver/Butler County service forester serving Clear Creek Forest District reported that fall colors are continuing to develop. Overall, the west-central region is approaching best color, though the stage of change can vary from hill to hill. Other than a few pops of red from tall red maples, many trees and shrubs in the McKeever Tract in northern Mercer County are still quite green. Conversely, the small Wolf Creek Tract in southern Mercer County is showcasing colorful golds, reds, and burgundy colors. Foresters working in Clarion and Jefferson counties have reported that the yellows and reds from birch, maple, and sassafras are showing nicely. Chestnut and white oak trees at higher elevations are starting to turn yellow and red as well. Continued sunshine and colder nights should steadily propel the transition to peak in roughly one week.

Pleasant color at Moshannon State Forest. (photo by C. Gulvas)

Foresters in Moshannon State Forest (serving Clearfield County) said oaks are beginning to turn yellow and red in clumps and on the tips of branches. Still deep green oaks provide a nice contrast with the species currently changing colors. Red maples are a vibrant scarlet and orange and sugar maples have turned bright yellow. Birches have turned a vivid yellow. Sassafras and black gum continue their show, turning yellow/orange and deep red. A recommended auto tour is the Elk Scenic Drive, consisting of routes 153, 255, 555, 120, and 879. Also, be sure to check out local lakes and ponds where the water and surrounding trees provide a stunning reflection, such as those at Parker Dam and Black Moshannon State parks.





A colorful view along Callen Run Road in the Clear Creek State Forest. (photo by J. Pierce)

Foresters in Forbes State Forest said a wide range of foliage conditions can be observed throughout southwestern Pennsylvania. Greene, Washington, and Allegheny counties are starting to change. Westmoreland and Fayette counties are approaching best color. Peak fall color continues across Somerset County, with fading color on some hillsides throughout the county. Red and sugar maples are at peak color throughout the Laurel Highlands and starting to show good color across the lower elevations of southwestern Pennsylvania. This week in the Laurel Highlands we will see a transition of fall color from northern hardwood forests (maples, birches, black cherry) to oak forests that are beginning to show shades of yellow and brown. Many maples, birches, and black cherry are shedding leaves. Laurel Ridge will show its best fall color this week. Laurel Hill State Park in Somerset County continues to provide excellent fall foliage viewing. Route 381 from Ligonier to Farmington is a beautiful drive through the Westmoreland and Fayette County countryside.



Peak foliage along Wolf Rock Trail, Mt. Davis Division, Forbes State Forest. (photo by D. Planinsek)

Central and Southcentral Regions

The Carbon/Schuylkill County service forester serving Weiser State Forest District indicated the northern parts of the district (including Columbia, Montour, and Northumberland counties) are approaching best color. Black gum, tulip poplar, sassafras, red maple, hickories, and birches are starting to display classic fall colors across the area. Other species contributing fall shades include dogwood, huckleberry, and oaks. Tracts recommended for visitation include Roaring Creek, Port Clinton, and Penn Forest. Foliage color will be at or near its peak in the next seven to ten days.



Foresters in Bald Eagle State Forest (serving Union, Snyder, and Mifflin counties) said birch, maple, and hickory species are beginning to achieve peak color, while some oaks are showing early signs of changing. Some of the early species such as black gum and sassafras are beginning to fade. Many areas within the state forest will reach peak color next week. With over 300 miles of state forest roads and more than 20 vistas, the district makes a great venue for scenic driving and hiking.

Foresters at the Mira Lloyd Dock Resource Conservation Center (Penn Nursery) in Spring Mills noted an “enjoyable” shift in color since the last report, with the region approaching best color. Species like white and chestnut oak, along with witch hazel and striped maples, are adding color. The bright reds and yellows of maples and birch can still be observed in many areas, but they are beginning to fade. A gorgeous drive can be found along Decker Valley Road and Sand Mountain Road on the way to Poe Valley and Poe Paddy State parks.

Bright hickory color at the Haldeman Tract, Weiser State Forest. (photo by A. Brought)

Foresters in Gallitzin State Forest representing Indiana, Blair, and Cambria counties said much of the region is still in the early stages of change. Individual black gums are near peak, and some maples, dogwoods, and birches are currently at peak color, while some are already losing their leaves. With the return of cooler evenings, a noticeable color shift in the overall forest from the typical bright, summer-green to a tint of yellow, crimson, and bronze color has occurred. Better viewing conditions are expected next week. A recommended viewing opportunity is in the Babcock Division at Crowfoot Vista which has a viewing platform and is easily accessible from Skyline Drive, Windber, PA. Peak color is predicted in about ten days.



Snyder Vista, Rager Mountain, Gallitzin State Forest. (photo by G. Hoy)



Bell's Majestic Vista, Bald Eagle State Forest. (photo by D. Smith)



Mountain Church Road, Gregg Township, Centre County. (photo by D. Smith)



Rothrock State Forest ranger staff reported that the district (serving Huntingdon and parts of Centre County) is still generally between the beginning stages of color to further along in some areas. Most of the forest is presenting light greens to yellow with some pockets of red. Poplar, birch, maple, and walnut are the most consistently colorful, in addition to our few areas of black gum, which have all turned an attractive shade of red. A recommended place to find a pretty yellow stand of birch is along Kepler Road to the north of Jo Hays Vista. Peak is expected in the region in late October.

The Perry/Juniata service forester serving Tuscarora State Forest District said the region is approaching best color. Species exhibiting best color now are hickory, birch, maples, gum, and poplars. Some of the best color in Tuscarora State Forest can be seen on Kansas Valley Road southeast of East Waterford between Conococheague and Tuscarora mountains.

View facing south toward Petersburg and Alexandria from Colerain Road. (photo by S. Pongracz)

Foresters representing Buchanan State Forest (serving Fulton, Bedford, Franklin counties) reported fall foliage is progressing nicely with recent sunshine and colder nights. Maples and hickory species are very bright, with brilliant yellow and orange showing. Peak is expected around 10/19.

The Cumberland/Franklin County service forester representing Michaux State Forest said there are still pockets of green depending on the elevation; much of the area is approaching best color. Species sporting attractive color include birches, poplars, hickories, and maples. A drive on Route 233 is still a good way to see color, as is Ridge Road. With the cooler projected temperatures, peak color is expected in approximately ten days.



Ridge Road, Michaux State Forest. (photo by A. Shull)



Fall colors on Kansas Valley Road, Perry County. (photo by L. Book)



Spotty color from overlook on Big Mountain, Bedford County. (photo by C. Clapper)

Northeastern Region

Foresters in Pinchot State Forest District said Susquehanna and Wayne counties continue to exhibit peak fall colors throughout most of the northern tier. American beech, oak, and hickory are vibrant, but a few species that peaked early have since dropped their leaves. Vivid red can be observed on sumac, blueberry bushes, and red maple. Sugar maples that are still holding their leaves are contributing burnt orange shades. Peak color change can be seen in parts of Wyoming, Lackawanna, and Luzerne counties, mostly in pockets of northern hardwood forests and along wetland areas. Red maples, birch, sassafras, and blueberry are currently adding the most color to the landscape. Most oak species are just starting to turn a light yellow/orange, giving a prolonged peak color opportunity for most of the southern half of the district. Some scarlet and white oaks are adding spots of deep red color. Most of the area is predicted to peak this coming week and into next. Some great hikes for fall foliage viewing include Prompton State Park in Wayne County, Merli Sarnoski County Park in Lackawanna County, and D&H Rail Trail in Lackawanna/Susquehanna counties.



Attractive fall color at Prompton State Park. (photo by J. Maza)

The Pike/Monroe County service forester serving Delaware State Forest District indicated that Pike County forests are showing best color. Birches and maples are currently in full color. Sassafras, hickory, and poison ivy are all in vibrant stages of yellow, red, and orange. Deep pockets of the forest that are dense with oaks are still mostly green. Northern Monroe County should be peaking around the end of this reporting period. Southern Monroe will likely be peaking around October 18. Recommended places to visit in the district for vibrant color include the Stairway Wild Area, Promised Land State Park, Ron Flad Park, and Thunder Swamp Trail.

Southeastern Region



Early hints of fall color at Blue Marsh Lake. (photo by H. Nowotarski)

The Bucks/Lehigh County service forester serving William Penn State Forest District said much of southeastern PA is just beginning to change, but counties in the northern end of the district, including Bucks and Northampton, are approaching best color. Species currently colorful include maples, hickories, birches, and sumac. A hike on the shared use trail at Blue Marsh Lake is recommended for some pleasant fall views. Peak in the district is still two to three weeks out.