The changing colors of autumn signal that trees are getting ready for winter. Throughout spring and summer, most of the food necessary for a tree’s growth is made in the leaves. This food-making process takes place in the cells containing chlorophyll, which gives leaves their green color.

In fall, partly due to shorter periods of daylight and cooler temperatures, the leaves stop making food. The chlorophyll breaks down and the green color disappears; yellow and orange—previously masked by the green—appear.

The vibrance of reds, purples, and oranges comes from other chemical processes. The brilliant red of Maples has a sweet side: in the warmth of fall days, sugar is produced in the leaves and then trapped by the night’s chill. The more sugar that accumulates, the brighter red the leaves turn.

The degree of color varies from tree to tree. Leaves directly exposed to the sun may turn red, while those on the shady side of the same tree may be yellow. Color also varies depending on weather conditions. When autumn is warm and rainy, leaves may have less red coloration.

As colors vary from mountains to valleys and from day to day, there’s no way to predict when fall foliage will be at its peak. This is a time of change, when each day is colored anew. Only two places in the world have this brilliant foliage: New England and part of Japan—but there’s no better place on earth to see nature’s most colorful display than the White Mountains of New Hampshire.

**PEAK COLOR & LEAF CHANGE**
on the south side of Mt. Washington

**At less than 2,000 feet:**
- **Red Maples peak mid-September**
- **Swamp Maples peak late September**
- **Goldenrod, White Turpens, and Blueberries peak early October**

**At 3,500 to 5,500 feet:**
- **Mountain Ash peak mid-September**
- **Yellow Birch, Mountain Maple, and Yellowberrys peak early October**
- **Reds of blueberries peak late September**
- **Trout Lilies peak early October**

**At 6,000 to 7,000 feet:**
- **Reds of blueberries peak late September**
- **Trout Lilies peak early October**

**Mid-low swampland areas:**
- **Reds of blueberries peak mid-September**
- **Birches and Sugar Maples peak early October**

You can enjoy autumn’s beauty all year long by preserving the colorful leaves. There are several ways to do this.

To preserve branches for use in bouquets, split the stems at the base. Cover branches with a solution of two parts water and one part glycerine to a depth of 2-4”. Keep in a cool, well-ventilated place until there is a very slight change in the leaf color. Then remove and hang upside-down until dry.

To preserve leaves, gather them while they are soft and supple, and use one of these methods. Mix one part glycerin with two parts water and submerged in the leaves for 2-6 days. Dry them with paper towels, and they should feel soft and pliable.

Or place them between two layers of wax paper, cover with piece of paper or a tea towel and use an iron to transfer the wax from the paper to the leaf. Give them two or three coatings of wax, until they are stiff and colorful.

You can also preserve autumn’s beauty in photographs.

We suggest using colorful overhanging branches to frame an inviting scene, or move in for a closeup of the delicate colors and patterns in individual leaves. You’ll love the results!
The brightest show on earth: autumn in the White Mountains!

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