

## Fall Color Report, September 24, 2021

Welcome to autumn at The Morton Arboretum. This is the first report of the year on fall color in the trees, shrubs, and other plants of the Arboretum's landscape.

Over the next few weeks, the start of cool nights and warm, sunny days will cause trees and shrubs to start developing their fall color. The intensity, brightness, and longevity of the color display will depend on upcoming weather, the health of the individual plants, and the amount of soil moisture available.

Color has been developing slowly in the Arboretum's collections, gardens, and woodlands, due to the dry conditions during this growing season. Stressed Freeman maples in Parking Lot 1 near the Visitor Center are developing a dull red color, with hackberries turning yellow and dropping some leaves already.

On the East Side, American elms are starting to lighten and turn a yellowish-green. Hackberries, catalpas, Kentucky coffeetrees, some tuliptrees, redbuds, and cork-trees are turning yellow and starting to drop scattered leaves. On crabapple trees, fruits are beginning to change color. Buckeye leaves have mostly already turned and dropped. Walnut leaves are beginning to turn, and their large nuts are beginning to drop. Oak acorns are dropping in the Oak Collection and in the East Woods. The woodland ground layer has late asters, goldenrods, and white snakeroot blooming. While the canopy trees are generally still green, sugar maples in sunny areas are beginning to show early color. At the top of some trees where the leaves are exposed to the sun, leaves are already turning a dull orange.

On the West Side, the Schulenberg Prairie is in its fall glory, with grasses setting seed and beginning to turn a golden color. Color highlights are provided by blue and purple asters and gentians.

Autumn is beginning to reveal its color palette at the Arboretum. It's the perfect time to spend a sunny fall day wandering through the paths and trails and taking in the beautiful scenery.