

Fall Color Report October 29, 2021

Autumn colors are beginning to change more rapidly in the woods at The Morton Arboretum. Enjoy the golds, reds, oranges, and greens in the Maple Collection; the East Woods, especially around the Big Rock Visitor Station; the Sumac Collection and the Asian collections; the Schulenberg Prairie; and the area of the Thornhill Education Center, including nearby gardens. The development of leaf color always depends on the weather, with cool nights and sunny days providing the richest array of hues. It seems likely that conditions in the near future will be favorable.

Reds and yellows can be seen in the area of the Visitor center and its parking lot, with reds and yellows to be seen among Freeman maples, sugar maples, and Miyabe's maples, elms, and tuliptrees. The leaves of oak-leaved hydrangeas are turning dark purple. The American elms in the nearby Elm collection and the nearby large yellow buckeye are at their yellow best.

The Midwest collection (Parking Lots 2 and 5) has golden colors showing on bitternut and shagbark hickories, and yellows on sugar and black maples, redbuds, pawpaws, and American elms. From the top of Frost Hill, the view across the DuPage River valley shows various shades of green accented with the yellows and yellow-oranges of maples and the last red leaves of sumacs.

On the East Side, American elms are continuing to lighten and turn yellow, as are catalpas, some tuliptrees, redbuds, and some pawpaws. Most ginkgo trees are still green, but a few trees near Parking Lot 18 are turning an early yellow. Crabapple fruits near Parking Lots 4 and 5 are changing to yellow and red, and are more noticeable as the trees' leaves turn and drop. Magnolias and tuliptrees near Parking Lot 5 are beginning to turn yellowish. Near Parking Lot 6, Japanese buckeyes and bottlebrush buckeyes have turned yellow. Walnuts are turning yellow and dropping their large nuts along the main route.

Now is the time to take a brisk walk through the colorful Maple Collection (Parking Lots 7 and 14); exercise and fall color are a great combination. Early purples and yellows are developing in the Oak Collection (Parking Lot 8).

The East Side's woodlands (Parking Lots 9, 10, 13, and 15) are turning yellow, with lindens, black walnuts, ironwoods, and most sugar maples providing the most color. The best color in the East Woods is to be seen near Parking Lots 9 and 15 and the Big Rock Visitor Station (Parking Lot 13). Take the opportunity to hike along the well-marked Wilderness Trail or Heritage Trail, which loop around from the visitor station.

On the West Side, the woods near Parking Lots 20 and 23 and Sterling Pond have the best color, with linden, ironwood, black walnut, and redbuds most vivid. Sugar maples near Sterling

and Lake Marmo are mostly yellow or yellow-orange. A large Freeman maple on the north shore of Lake Marmo is a nice purple color.

The Schulenberg Prairie is in its fall glory, with grasses turning color and setting seed, and with highlights of blue and purple provided by asters and gentians.

This week should see our color display develop rapidly! This is an excellent time to get out and enjoy the fall weather and the splendid experience that nature is providing to us. Visit often through the season to watch the colors change.