



# Falling for autumn

## State website gives tips and info for leaf peepers

**T**urn off the television, put away the electronic devices, get off your arse and head outside. It's mid-October in Pennsylvania, and that means that the greatest show on earth is happening right now in the trees all around you.



**KEVIN O'NEILL**

*InSites*

Our latitude and longitude, combined with the varied elevation of our mountains and valleys, puts us in a unique location where numerous species of deciduous trees thrive. We're at the nexus of the lower range of many northern species, the higher range of southern species and

the eastern edge of species from the Mississippi Valley. The result is an explosion of fall color unlike anywhere else.

If you want to learn more about our foliage, including the best times and places to view it, visit [dcnr.state.pa.us](http://dcnr.state.pa.us), click on the Forestry icon in the menu bar, then click on 2016 Fall Foliage Reports.

### Maps and facts

This subsection of the DCNR's much larger website contains some useful resources for leaf peepers. The page is topped with a beautiful photo of colorful trees reflected in a still lake. Under that is an explanation of why Pennsylvania is so well suited for spectacular foliage, and beneath that are links to more resources.

The first link is called Story Maps. This section features photos, maps and driving directions to 23 areas around the state that offer prime leaf viewing. You can scroll and zoom on the maps, and

### Peak foliage color

■ **Lackawanna and counties to the east and west are peaking now through Monday, Oct. 24.**

■ **Counties to the north are already in their peak and will continue for another week.**

■ **Southern counties will peak Friday and last until the end of the month.**

you're supposed to be able to customize the directions using your location, but this feature didn't work when I tried.

The second link, Weekly Fall Foliage Map and Reports, provides a color-coded map showing when and where the colors hit their peaks. Under the map are summaries of conditions in different parts of the state.

The next link, Discover Fall Tour of Southwest PA, provides

detailed information on two specific leaf-viewing drives. There are turn-by-turn directions, descriptions of what you'll see and information on attractions, dining and services along the way.

The last link, Why Autumn Leaves Change Color, is educational. It describes the biological processes that cause leaves to change color. It also discusses the impacts of daylight, temperature, moisture and other factors that affect the intensity and duration of the color.

Fall Foliage Reports is compact and useful. Its design lacks unity across the different sections, but it's functional and easy to use.

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