

GEORGIA FORESTRY  
COMMISSION



## North GA Fall Leaf Report

NW  NC  NE

Date: 10-09-2024

Name: Ben Cobb

Please describe the colors of each species of understory and overstory trees. Summarize the coloration in the mountains at higher and lower elevations, and in the river corridors. Are any species still green? What species have peaked? Which species are fading?

The fall foliage season is just commencing in north-central Georgia. Currently, there are some areas of nice fall color that can be found throughout the region in patches. However, the forest canopy across all elevation ranges is predominately green. The river corridors are beginning to offer some early displays of color ranging from dull yellow to bright yellow and brown hues from yellow-poplar, sycamore, and black walnut. Understory species such as sourwood, dogwood, sumac, and red maple are showcasing some vivid reds and orange displays, and this should only continue to increase in vibrancy moving forward. Overall, the forest canopy and ecosystems should begin to rapidly transform the mountainsides into a plethora of stunning colors in the next 7-14 days due to upcoming cooler days and chilly, but not freezing nighttime temperatures.

Consider these species in your descriptions:

Dogwood	green to burgundy	Birch	green beginning to fade to yellow
Yellow-poplar	green to yellow to brown	Sourwood	dull red to bright red
Sumac	green to orange-red	Maple	green to yellow-orange-red
Beech	green	Oak	green
Blackgum	green to orange-red	Sassafras	green to yellow-orange
Sweetgum	green-yellow-maroon	Hickory	green to yellow
Redbud	gree to light yellow		

Estimate percentage of color change from green to date:

6 % above 3000'    3 % below 3000'.

**Is a good season expected? Why? When is “peak” expected this year?**

Currently, it looks like we are in store for a good leaf-viewing season this year. Recent heavy rains have alleviated the severe drought conditions that were plaguing the region for most of late summer and early fall. With that being said, the trees should not be as stressed over the next several weeks. Excellent to peak viewing conditions are typically the second half of October, and right now it looks like we are on schedule for that, perhaps just a few days later than normal.

**Describe any impact of rain, wind, drought or frost on leaf color this week and/or this season in general?**

Fortunately for the mountains of north Georgia, we did not receive a tremendous volume of wind from Tropical Storm/ Hurricane Helene. Most of the foliage is still intact across all elevations of the mountainous areas of north-central Georgia. We did receive greatly beneficial rainfall from the storm which should help to prolong the season, and decrease the likelihood of premature leaf casting. No frost or freezing conditions are expected in the near-term, however, significantly cooler conditions along with bright, sunny days are forecasted moving forward over the next 5-10 days. These conditions should create a great recipe for rapid, intense fall color development over the next two weeks!

**Suggest a nice, scenic weekend drive for a good look at current fall color. Include specific information about highway numbers, historic markers, notable overlooks, weekend events, etc. *Please attach photos/video from these locations or of representative fall color.***

The Russell- Brasstown Scenic Byway is offering some early noticeable displays of fall color at this time. Also, State Route 180 from State Route 17 south of Hiawassee, to U.S. 129/19 south of Blairsville is beginning to show some nice reds from sourwoods and maple. And, State Route 180 Spur, the road that takes visitors to Brasstown Bald, is one of the best viewing opportunities in the state right now. There are numerous festivals happening this weekend in the north Georgia area! The Georgia Apple Festival is taking place in Ellijay on Saturday 10-12 and Sunday 10-13. The Fall Arts in the Park is scheduled for Blue Ridge on Saturday 10-12 and Sunday 10-13. The Sorghum Festival is also taking place in Blairsville on Saturday 10-12 and Sunday 10-13. Finally, the Georgia Mountain Fall Festival will be held at the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds in Hiawassee on Friday 10-11, Saturday 10-12, and Sunday 10-13.