

The Droplet

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Autumn Colour Change in Trees, Part III



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Summing up the previous two articles, where we looked at what triggers autumn colour in our trees, we spoke about stress-induced colour, as well as what chemical and environmental factors are involved. In this final part, we look at some of the species to keep an eye out for, that (usually) give us outstanding displays.

As a genera, the Maples are a terrific group of trees, with nearly all of them, including Sycamore, delivering a huge cross-section of colours. Many nurseries breed the maple cultivars specifically for their dazzling autumn display. If you search on our [TreePlotter](#) database for Freemans Maple (*Acer x freemanii*), you will never be disappointed in the colours. Red Maples, Japanese maples, Box Elder and our native Field Maple all treat us well in autumn.

A very popular tree for planting in recent years has been the Sweetgum (*Liquidambar styraciflua*), and these always give us reds, purples, oranges and yellows in abundance.

Other great trees for colour: The Persian Ironwood, Spindle tree, Rowan, Dogwoods, Katsura, Tupelo, Mespilus... we could go on. You can find them by searching our inventory; you may have a favourite yourself that's not listed so if you've thought about creating a [Tree Trail](#) for autumn colour, we can help you with that.

We shouldn't ignore our native trees, such as Oak, Beech, Hornbeam, and Hazel, as their collective yellowing in October onwards can create splendid backdrops. However, these are not common in urban areas, so visit your local park or woods to enjoy them. Getting outside to enjoy the autumn always helps you feel better, even if it is the portent of winter, but the reminder of the changing seasons and the splendour of the natural world can only be a good thing.

So, to summarise:

- The colour of autumn leaves is determined by the type of tree, married with the amount of sunlight it receives, temperature, and soil type.
- Some trees, such as maples and oaks, change colour dramatically in autumn, while others, like pines or firs, do not change colour at all.
- The change of colour in autumn leaves is a natural process that helps the tree prepare for winter, and the leaves of deciduous trees fall off in autumn to conserve energy.

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We hope you can take the time to get out and enjoy the trees Birmingham has to offer, and look out for our Autumn Colour Press Release, that will appear in our next monthly newsletter, which you can find in the links below.