

# Signs of fall are everywhere

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Mother Nature is giving us all kinds of signs that fall is here. The first and most obvious are the fall colors of deciduous plants.

Trees and shrubs are starting to show fall colors and it looks like we might have a pretty decent show this year.

Granted it was pretty dry during the summer, we got just enough rain lately to moisten the ground and provide for plants. Typically when it's really dry, fall colors suffer.

Cool nights cause chlorophyll, the green pigment, to break down. This allows all of the other pigments to show through.

These pigments are already in the leaves, but chlorophyll is stronger and is more prevalent during the growing season.

Another sign that it's fall is the yellowing of the inner needles of pine trees. This common occurrence sometimes causes alarm for homeowners because it looks like the plant might have a problem.

Despite being an evergreen, pines, spruces and all others don't keep their needles or leaves forever. They eventually shed the older foliage.

Pines do this in the fall and you can really see it showing now. The inner needles are turning yellow and will eventually drop. No reason to panic if it's the inner needles as this is normal.

It's when the outer or newer needles start to die that you have a problem.

I mentioned leaves in the above paragraph because broadleaved evergreens such as holly and boxwood lose their older leaves as well. They tend to do this in the spring rather than fall.

The other sign that fall is here is the arrival of some of the fall household pests such as stink bugs, multi-colored Asian ladybeetles (MALB), leaf-footed bug, and others.

I know that these are annoying and a pain in the fanny but they are pretty harmless. These insects are simply looking for a warm place to overwinter and your house is the perfect place.

Caulking and sealing all possible entrances is the recommendation but I sometimes have to chuckle at this recommendation because it's such a challenge. It seems like no matter how good your house is sealed, these critters find a way in.

Sweeping them up and eliminating them is about the best method of control. Be careful not to use a sweeper that has an impeller that crushes. The stinkbug (aptly named) and MALB give off an odor when crushed.

Knocking them off of walls and windows into a bucket of soapy water will kill them.

Populations of these insects rise and fall. For instance, we haven't really had a bad season for MALB in recent years. On the other hand, the stinkbug populations seem to be growing right now as many are complaining of them.

Fortunately for me, they are just now finding my house whereas they have been pestering my son and daughter-in-law in the Beavercreek area for years!



Fall color of sugar maples



White pines lose their inner needles each fall