



Fall Colors 2016 are predicted to peak in late October

by Madelaine Gerard, Staff Writer
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ALTON - According to the trusty Farmers' Almanac, which has been providing amazingly accurate long-range weather predictions since 1818, leaves in Southern Illinois should be reaching their peak by **Oct. 28** at the very latest.

The opportunity to gawk upon the autumn wonder may be affected by heavy rain and strong wind knocking those leaves loose from their branches. Wednesday's weather forecast brings a chance of thunderstorms in the evening, while the weekend's forecast remains fairly clear as of now.

The "Indian Summer" weather pattern that has been blanketed over the region as of late seems to be stifling Mother Nature as our area's trees still remain lush and green.

Although the transition from lush green to the beautiful reds, oranges and yellow leaves of autumn seems to be going quite slowly, the Riverbend is filled with locations that are perfect to go "leaf peeping" at.



Scott Isringhausen, Program Coordinator for the **Illinois Department of Natural Resources**, monitors the changing leaves at **Pere Marquette State Park**. The reasons that the leaves change in the autumn, he says, is due to the amount of chlorophyll in the leaves. As the chemical in the leaves break down, the yellow, orange and red colors become visible.

"In order to get those bright, beautiful leaves, you want nice warm and sunshiny days with cold nights without any frost," Isringhausen said.

"The leave change is not going to be as pretty as I've hoped for, unfortunately," he said. "It's not so much the warm weather that affected the change, but the dry weather that we had."

Those who love to go on a scenic drive through Pere Marquette State Park will see that the leaves surrounding the park's winding road are patchy in spots but are still relatively green. Currently, the lookout points throughout the park are the best place to spot the changing leaves atop some of the area's surrounding trees.

The foliage within the **Bethalto Arboretum** and **Gordon Moore Park** are slowly but surely changing colors, making them perfect places to go for a stroll. Even though it's beginning to look a lot like Christmas with the construction of its annual Christmas

lights display, **Rock Spring Park's** trees are popping with those rich autumn colors. Their new sidewalk that lines College Avenue showcases some bright orange sugar maple trees.