



Ontario, *Yours to Discover*

Fall Colour Progression Report

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Welcome to the fall colour report for **Thursday, September 28, 2017**. The **Fall Colour Progression Report** is produced weekly and posted on www.ontariotravel.net from early September to mid-October and is designed to help you discover great scenic lookouts, fall driving and hiking tours, special fall packages, community events and studio tours. Plan your perfect Ontario fall escape now!

Ontario is the premier destination to enjoy the annual spectacle of summer's lush greenery transformed into a mosaic of magnificent rich shades of red, orange and yellow. It is also harvest time, the perfect time to hop into the car to discover local flavours at farmers markets, orchards and pumpkin patches, and take in the sights and special events. [Go online](#) for lots of great suggestions on how to enrich your fall colour touring experience.

The warm and sunny weather continues with minimal change to the colours; most areas of the province are reporting an estimated 30% change. The exceptions again are the Agawa Canyon and Algonquin Park, where the colour change ranges from 80 – 90% and some leaves are beginning to fall. Traditionally, Algonquin Park's fall colours occur earlier than surrounding areas because of the Park's higher elevation, up to almost 600 metres above sea level. This can mean the best colour is observed several weeks prior to places like Ottawa (70 metres above sea level), Toronto (75 metres above sea level), or even communities just outside the park's boundaries.

The calendar is filled with tons of fantastic seasonal events, from scarecrow and pumpkin festivals to fall artisan tours. Several are listed at the end of this report but you will find many more [online](#).

Trip Planner and Suggested Itineraries

Get [trip planning inspiration](#) from a host of carefully curated experiences and trip ideas across this great province and customize one to suit your passion.

Northern Region

Thunder Bay area: 70% change

Predominant colours:

Yellow/gold with hints of red

Best viewing opportunities:

- Thunder Bay Lookout
- Marie Louise Lake Picnic Area, Sleeping Giant Provincial Park

Take a beautiful fall hike and explore the Sibley Peninsula at Sleeping Giant Provincial Park.

The drive along the Nor'Wester Mountains just south of Thunder Bay along Hwy 61 is a great touring destination where the unique few stands of sugar maples have turned a bright red.

Several walking trails within the city limits (Cascades, Centennial Park, Mills Block) or in nearby provincial parks such as Kakabeka Falls, where there has been significant colour change, are a great way to get out and enjoy the fall colours.

Sault Ste. Marie/Agawa Canyon: 80% change

Predominant colours:

Yellow, oranges, and red with the most colour at the north end of Agawa Park

Best viewing opportunities:

- A great way to take in the beauty of the Algoma region and see the picturesque landscape that inspired the Group of Seven is aboard the [Agawa Canyon Tour Train](#) which runs daily until October 15. Book early to avoid disappointment.
- Edmund Fitzgerald Lookout at Pancake Bay Provincial Park offers spectacular views of Pancake Bay and Lake Superior
- Hiking Nokomis, Orphan Lake, Awausee, Towab and the [Coastal Trail](#) in Lake Superior Provincial Park. Paddlers: Mijinemungshing Lake and Rabbit Blanket Lake are good choices for excursions; rental canoes are available. Drop by the Agawa Bay Campground Visitor Centre for suggested trails and other park information until October 10.
- Twin Bridges Trail in Chutes Provincial Park

[The Grand Algoma Route](#) has been nicknamed by motorcycle enthusiasts as Ontario's "Tail of the Dragon" because of the miles of twists and turns that follow the Mississagi River. Get ready to enjoy jaw dropping scenery with the views of the Lake Superior coastline.

This Saturday, Elliot Lake's [Arts on the Trail](#) is the perfect excuse to hop in the car to check out local art studios and enjoy live music.

The [Country Road Open House](#) happens this weekend on St. Joseph Island as well. Enjoy fall colours on scenic country roads as you drive from place to place on this self-guided agritourism tour.

Northeastern Ontario: 30 - 40% change

Predominant colours:

Pockets of colour expanding; green beginning to fade

Best viewing opportunities:

- Onaping High Falls' A.Y. Jackson Lookout

Superb sight lines from the heights of the Granite Ridge Trail and The Crack Trail in Killarney Provincial Park offer views across the forested quartzite ridges all the way to Georgian Bay and Manitoulin Island. Buy a day pass at the park office or use the self-serve (credit card) kiosk at the Crack parking lot trailhead.

Enjoy Manitoulin Island's [Cup and Saucer Trail](#). With breathtaking lookouts from atop steep cliffs, see kilometres of treetops and even Lake Huron in the distance; this is one of the most popular trails in Ontario. Don't forget about the new entrance off of Hwy 540.

Enjoy some of the loveliest scenery in Ontario from the comfort of the legendary [Chief Commanda II](#). Hop aboard for a relaxing two-hour North Shore trip to view Lake Nipissing's open vistas, natural beaches, rising escarpments and fall colours. Only two sailings left this season: September 28 and October 1.

Central Ontario Region

Algonquin Park: 90% change

Predominant colours:

Red/orange

Best viewing opportunities:

Algonquin's Hwy 60 Corridor provides easy access to the Park area dominated by the types of maple trees popular with keen leaf peepers - sugar, red and striped maples. Both the Algonquin Art Centre (km 20) and the Algonquin Visitor Centre (km 43) offer great views. Typically, late September to early October offer the best maple viewing, while early to mid-October offer the best poplar (aspen) colour. Check out the [live webcam](#) from the Visitor Centre.

Trails along the Hwy 60 corridor, at Lake of Two Rivers and Tea Lake picnic areas, the Tea Lake Campground, and the East Beach Picnic Pavilion all offer great hiking and picnic opportunities to enjoy the colours in the park, and the first loop of the [Minnesing Mountain Bike Trail](#) is open for hiking and biking.

Parry Sound area: 30-40% change

Predominant colours:

Green with reds and oranges

Best viewing opportunities:

See nature's spectacular colour show from the seat of a seaplane with [Georgian Bay Airways](#).



Photo: Georgian Bay Airways

[White Squall](#) makes it easy for you to get out onto Georgian Bay for an autumn paddling excursion; rentals available from their paddling centre location north of Parry Sound, in Nobel.

Muskoka: 20 - 30% change

Gravenhurst: small increase in colour change – yellow and orange predominate

Bracebridge: small increase in colour change – yellow and orange predominate

Huntsville/Lake of Bays: pockets of colour expanding – reds and oranges more evident

Bala: small pockets of colour – yellow and orange predominate

Georgian Bay: small increase in colour change – yellow predominates

Best viewing opportunities:

- Lions Lookout in Huntsville
- Huckleberry Rock near Port Carling
- Dorset Fire Tower in Dorset

Driving routes:

- Muskoka Rd 17 from Gravenhurst to Bracebridge; stop at Muskoka Beach for a gorgeous view of Lake Muskoka, sections of the road are canopy covered
- Hwy 117 to Baysville and Dorset, stop and walk along the river in the park then to Dorset to the Lookout Tower
- Hwy 118 east Bracebridge to Hwy 35
- Muskoka Rd 13 Severn Bridge to Torrance is a winding road with lots of maple trees; stop and hike the Torrance Barren

Pick up a map from [Muskoka Tourism](#) and follow one of six driving tours

This is the last weekend for the Muskoka Autumn Studio Tour, where the finest professional artists and craftspeople working in Muskoka welcome you to their studios; [download the map](#).

Arrowhead Provincial Park north of Huntsville is home to 15 km of hiking trails. Head to the Big Bend Lookout Trail to enjoy miles of scenic beauty. If you'd rather ride, there are two moderately challenging mountain bike trails – the 4.5 km Arrowhead Lake Trail and the 3 km Lookout Trail.

Minden/Haliburton: 50% change

Predominant colours:

Green

Best viewing opportunities:

- Dorset Fire Tower, Hwy 35 north to Dorset, Twelve Mile Lake Falls
- Buttermilk Falls
- Leslie Frost Centre
- Marsh's Falls on the Oxtongue River
- around Carnarvon

Thirty studios are participating in this year's [Haliburton County Studio Tour](#) offering a vast variety of original paintings, pottery, jewelry, textile art, sculpture, metal work, glass blowing, and figural art for your viewing and shopping pleasure.

Hike the looped [Minden Water Trail](#) to admire the raw beauty of the Gull River's whitewater rapids, a popular destination for kayaking and canoeing; stop in for a visit at the [Minden Hills Museum & Heritage Village](#).

Take a walk along the suspended canopy boardwalk that winds through the tree tops 20 metres above the forest floor in [Haliburton Forest's old growth forest](#). It's exhilarating!

Barrie/Oro-Medonte/Ontario's Lake Country: 20 - 30% change

Predominant colours:

Green with some yellow and gold starting to show

Best viewing opportunities and suggested driving routes:

Download four great fall driving tour [route maps](#) for:

- Ontario Lake Country route: Hwy 12 from Orillia to Bass Lake, Hwy 400 to Coldwater
- Oro-Medonte route: Bass Lake Side Road to Hwy 93 and into Craighurst, on to Horseshoe Valley Road and Orillia
- Severn Route: Hwy 12 to Port Severn, Town Line to Division Road, Sparrow Lake Road to Washago and then Orillia
- Rama/Ramara Route: start at Rama Road and watch for Osprey nests

This is a great time of the year to experience the Maidenhair Fern Trail loop at Sibbald Point Provincial Park; pick up the trail brochure at the trailhead. St. George's Anglican Church, built in 1877, sits at the northwest corner of the park; its graveyard is the final resting place of famous Canadian authors Stephen Leacock and Mazo de la Roche. The park is open for camping until Thanksgiving and open for day use year round.

The Waterfront Trail along Kempenfelt Bay has approximately 6.7 km of mostly flat, paved trail, ideal for a fall cycling excursion amid the changing canopy. [Harwood Ski and Bike](#) have over 80 km of beautiful rolling trails through hardwood and pine forests for riders of all ages and abilities; rentals available. Relax and enjoy a tasty bowl of homemade gourmet soup in their café.

Rather walk? Ardagh Bluffs and the Nine Mile Portage Heritage Trail are just a few of the [great hiking and walking trails](#) in and around Barrie.

South Georgian Bay/Owen Sound/Blue Mountain area: 20 - 30% change

Predominant colours:

Green, with yellow, orange and red starting to show through

Best viewing opportunities:

- Irish Mountain Lookout
- Epping Lookout
- Old Baldy Lookout
- Big Head River Valley Lookout
- Beaver Valley Lookout
- Scenic Caves Lookout
- Blue Mountain Lookout

Download printable [maps of four Great Scenic Drives](#) in South Georgian Bay.

Not much beats relaxing in the Scandinavian baths as you soak in the fall colours. Situated on 25 acres of natural Ontario birch, Canadian maple and pine trees, [Scandinave Spa](#) at Blue Mountain offers expansive views of the UNESCO World Biosphere Reserve Niagara Escarpment.

Download the [Saints & Sinners driving route map](#) and head out to discover local beer, wine and cider producers. You can visit six of them to enjoy tastings and pairings, take tours, purchase beverages, and enjoy pub-style meals.

Grey County has an abundance of waterfalls, not the least of which is [Inglis Falls](#), an 18-metre high cascade, created by the Sydenham River meeting the edge of the Niagara Escarpment. On a clear day you can see down the valley into the City of Owen Sound and out to the Owen Sound harbour. Plan a picnic, check out the historic grist mill or access the Bruce Trail for a hike.

East Region

The Kawarthas/Northumberland: 50 - 60% change

Predominant colours:

Greens, golds and reds

Best viewing opportunities and suggested driving tours:

- Burleigh Falls
- Pedestrian suspension bridge over the Trent River Gorge

Download maps for great [fall driving tours](#):

- Ring Around Lake Stony
- Harvest Season in Harbour Town
- To Burleigh or Bust
- Leaf it to Lang
- To Buckhorn & Beyond

The [Ring Around Stony Lake Fall](#) driving tour will be beautiful drive this weekend. Be sure to drop by Petroglyphs Provincial Park and view the largest known concentration of Aboriginal rock carvings (Petroglyphs) in Canada depicting turtles, snakes, birds, humans and more. Hiking is available at the park as well. Keep in mind that a large portion of the forest at Petroglyphs is coniferous so there won't be as many vibrant colours inside the park but more so around the surrounding area.

Visit the world's highest hydraulic lift lock and view the incredible fall colours of the surrounding area or take a cruise and through the lock with [Liftlock & the Riverboat Cruises](#).

Great fall colour cycling is yours to enjoy along the [Victoria Rail Trail](#), which stretches from Lindsay to Kinmount.

Prince Edward County/Belleveille: 30 - 40% change

Predominant colours:

Green, some hints of colour starting to show

Driving routes /viewing locations:

- Sandbanks Provincial Park
- Lake on the Mountain Provincial Park
- County Road 13 (from Richardson Lookout to Black River Cheese) – described as driving through a tunnel of leaves
- Victoria Road, Ameliasburgh

MacIntosh apples are ready for picking at [Campbell's Orchards](#). Pick your own seven days a week, nibble on hot dogs and corn on the cob, take a wagon ride or work your way through the corn maze. They've also got lots of fresh apple cider.

Drive or cycle bucolic backroads along The County's [Taste Trail](#) and discover locally grown goodness. Pop into a cidery, brewery, or ice-creamery for a cold treat; visit the wineries and taste something new; enjoy a meal at any of the Taste Trail restaurants. [Download the guide](#) , pack the cooler and hit the road.

[Cornwall/Thousand Islands/Kingston](#): 20% change

Predominant colours:

Green, starting to see the first hints of colour change in the tips of the trees

Driving routes/viewing locations

- Thousands Islands Parkway; this 40-km stretch of road runs parallel to the St. Lawrence River and affords fantastic views of the river, the 1000 Islands, the American mainland and the Frontenac Arch Biosphere's ancient granite ridges.

Award-winning [Pumpkinferno](#) returns to Upper Canada Village featuring specially designed Canada 150 themed pumpkin-carved displays. Tour this spectacular outdoor art exhibit of 7,000 handcrafted pumpkins all lit at night along a kilometer long path against the village's picturesque 19th century backdrop.

Take a spectacular fall colour [1000 Islands Helicopter Tour](#). Fly to Seeley's Bay and travel along the historic Rideau Canal system, enjoying aerial views of Jones Falls, Davis Locks, Chaffey's Locks and Rock Dunder.

Escape the crowd and witness [Thousand Islands National Park](#) as few do, from the intimate perspective of a kayak, canoe or paddle board. [1000 Islands Kayaking Company](#), [Misty Isles Lodge](#), and [Ahoy Rentals](#) (Kingston) can equip you, provide basic or advanced instruction, and guidance on routes.

[Ottawa](#): 20 – 30% change

Predominant colours:

Green, with pockets of orange and yellow

Best viewing opportunities:

Pick up a self-guided tour brochure at either entrance to Rideau Hall (the Thomas Gate, off Sussex Drive or the Mackay Gate, off Mackay Street), the residence of our Governor General, and explore the grounds.

Not only is the [Rideau Canal](#) a UNESCO World Heritage Site, it's a family friendly cycle path. Pick up bikes downtown from RentABike under the Plaza Bridge at the Chateau Laurier and enjoy the pathway all the way to the Dows Lake Pavillion.

This Saturday, in the spirit of Oktoberfest, the [Ottawa Bach Choir](#), in collaboration with Ars Nova and the German Embassy, are hosting an evening of music by Johann Sebastian Bach and his Baroque contemporaries, local beer brewed by Kichesippi Beer Co., German red wine, hors d'œuvres and sumptuous desserts.

[Ottawa Valley](#): 30% change

Predominant colours:

Green with some reds and yellows starting to show

Best viewing opportunities and suggested driving tours:

- Barron Canyon, from Algonquin Park's eastern Achray entrance
- Wilno Scenic Lookout

- Westmeath Lookout

[Download maps](#) for these great driving tours:

- Up The Mighty Ottawa
- A Trail of Two Rivers
- Switchbacks and Shorelines
- The Historic Opeongo Line
- Friends and Neighbours

Motorcyclists can enjoy some of the province's best 'twisties' in the Ottawa Valley; the route from Perth to [Centennial Lake Road](#) is hard to beat for great colour and scenic shoreline views.

[Fulton's Pancake House & Sugar Bush](#) have four marked walking trails through their forest for you. Afterwards, head to their Maple Shoppe (open Tuesdays and Thursdays) to sample maple syrup, gourmet maple products and maple candy, and browse their local artisan giftware.

Southwestern Ontario Region

Stratford, Fergus & Elora: 30% change

Predominant colours:

Green

Best viewing opportunities:

- Elora Gorge; riverside trails and scenic overlooks provide hikers with stunning views

Enjoy the fall colours in Bissell Park along the Grand River in the beautiful village of Elora this Sunday as they celebrate the [Annual Horse and Hound parade](#). Meet and mingle with the riders, horses and hounds at the Mill Street Bistro.

Hop onto the [Elora Cataract Trailway](#) with your bikes at any of a number of communities in the area. It runs through rolling countryside east of Elora, through the historic community of Fergus and past Belwood Lake to the Forks of the Credit Provincial Park at Cataract.

Here's a delicious way to savour the flavours of the harvest - the [Savour Stratford Pumpkin Trail](#). Enjoy delicious pumpkin treats like freshly baked pie, pumpkin fudge, Thai pumpkin soup and pumpkin spiced coffee along the trail through to October 31. Download the [brochure](#) .

Windsor & Essex County: 20 - 30% change

Predominant colours:

Green, with pockets of vibrant orange and yellow

Best viewing opportunities:

Head to the [Ruthven Apple Festival](#) this weekend for lots of fun, food, crafts, an apple peeling contest, great entertainment and a classic car show on Sunday.

[Thiessen Orchards](#) u-pick in Leamington is open for the season with Macintosh, Golden Delicious, Mutsu and Empire apples ready to be picked; Honey Crisp, Gala and Ambrosia available in the bins.

Niagara Region

Niagara Falls: 10 - 20% change

Predominant colours:

Yellow, with pockets of red and orange

Best touring/viewing opportunities:

- Brock's Monument, Queenston Heights
- Niagara River Parkway - Fort Erie to Niagara-on-the-Lake

This is a beautiful season for golf and the seven spectacular courses that are part of the [Niagara Golf Trail](#) will challenge any serious golfer.

The picturesque Twenty Valley runs along the Niagara Escarpment and is well known for its small lot, craft and rare artisanal wineries as well as a number of charming shops. It also boasts some outstanding [bike trails](#), whether you're peddling in between wineries, or taking the scenic route.

Toronto and Region

Burlington: 10 – 20% change

Predominant colours:

Green, with small pockets of reds and yellows starting to show

Best viewing opportunities:

Plan a walk or hike through the natural areas and the Arboretum at the Royal Botanical Gardens; they've got [over 27 km of nature trails](#) to enjoy. The new [Anishinaabe waadiziwin Educational Trail](#) just opened; it explores plants used by the Anishinaabe peoples, and their connections to culture, language, ecology and history; download the map.

Caledon and area: 20% change

Predominant colours:

Green, with dark orange and yellows

Best viewing opportunities:

- Cliff Top Trail, Mono Cliffs

It looks like it's going to be a great weekend for the annual [Belfountain Salamander Festival](#).

There'll be an artisan market, a pie eating contest, a chance to meet salamanders or tie a fishing fly, free yoga and, of course, lots of harvest goodies like squash soup and warm apple cider.

York, Durham, Hills of Headwaters, Hockley Valley: 20 - 30% change

Predominant colours:

Green, with reds and yellows

Best viewing opportunities and suggested driving tours:

York Region's [Pumpkin Pie Trail](#) runs through to October 1. It's a celebration of all things pumpkin – pies, tarts, and a pumpkin carving contest, for example – as well as wagon rides, scarecrows and corn mazes.

Surrounded by 100 acres of forested landscape and a network of outdoor paths and hiking trails, the [McMichael Gallery's](#) 6,000-piece Canadian art collection, includes works by Tom Thomson, the Group of Seven, First Nations, Metis and Inuit artists. Explore the grounds and the outdoor art, and then go inside to see visit the [Group of Seven Guitar Project](#).

Toronto and area: 10 - 20% change

Predominant colours:

Green with reds and yellows starting to show

Experience an authentic Oktoberfest Festschale filled with traditional Bavarian dancers, polka bands, delicious Bavarian fare, singing and dancing at Toronto Oktoberfest this weekend.

Some of the great events happening across Ontario this weekend:

- Barrie Area – [Pumpkin Festival & Haunted Adventures](#), until Oct 31
- Barrie Area (Dalston) – [Pumpkin Festival at Brown's Pumpkin Patch](#), Oct 1 – 31
- Barrie Area (Horseshoe Valley) – [3rd Annual Copeland Forest Fall Fair](#), Sept 30
- Brantford & Area – [Brant Studio Tour](#), Sept 30 – Oct 1
- Brechin – [2nd Annual Brechin Scarecrow Festival](#), Sept 30
- Collingwood - [Side Launch Collingwood Oktoberfest](#), Sept 30
- Creemore – [6th Annual Autumn Arts Weekend](#), Sept 30 – Oct 1
- Dufferin County – [Dufferin Town & Country Farm Tour](#), Sept 30
- Dundas – [Dundas Studio Tour](#), Sept 30 – Oct 1
- Elmvale – [Pumpkin Mania at Rounds Ranch](#), until Oct 29
- Elora & Fergus – [Elora & Fergus Studio Tour](#), Sept 30 – October 1
- Gravenhurst – [Sawdust City Oktoberfest](#), Sept 30
- Grey Bruce & Area – [7th Annual Fall Open Studio Weekend](#), Sept 29 – Oct 1
- Guelph & Wellington County – [7th Annual Rural Romp](#), Sept 30
- Kawartha Lakes – [15th Annual Kawartha Farmfest](#), Sept 30
- Madawaska Valley – [Madawaska Valley Studio Tour](#), Sept 30 – Oct 1
- Markdale Area – [24th Annual Saugeen Autumn Leaves Studio Tour](#), Sept 29 – Oct 1
- Meaford – [Apple Harvest Craft Show](#), Sept 30 – Oct 1
- Meaford – [Scarecrow Invasion Parade & Festival](#), Sept 29
- Milton – [Milton Area Studio Tour](#), Sept 30 – Oct 1
- Milton – [Harvest Fall Festival](#), until Oct 29
- Muskoka – [39th Annual Muskoka Autumn Studio Tour](#), Sept 30 – Oct 1
- Napanee – [Napanee's Scarecrow Festival](#), Sept 30
- Newmarket – [9th Annual Studio Tour & Art Show](#), Sept 30 – Oct 1
- Orillia Area – [Pumpkinfest at Hewitt's Farm](#), until Oct 31
- Penetanguishene – [Pumpkinferno](#), Sept 28 – Oct 30
- Penetanguishene & Tiny – [The Bay Studio Tour](#), Sept 30 – Oct 1
- Port Elgin – [Port Elgin Pumpkinfest](#), Sept 30 – Oct 1
- Prescott-Russell – [11th Annual ARTour](#), Sept 30 – Oct 1
- South River (Almaguin Highlands) – [6th Artscape Show & Sale](#), Sept 29 – Oct 1
- Tottenham – [South Simcoe Steam Train Fall Colour Excursion](#), Sep30 – Oct 15
- Waterloo – [Mary Allen Studio Tour](#), Sept 29 – Oct 1
- Victoria County – [32nd Victoria County Studio Tour](#), Sept 30 – Oct 1

Fall Agricultural Fairs are lots of fun and a great addition to your fall colour tour. Information on those underway this weekend can be found in our [calendar of events](#).

Contact: Kevin Forget
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