

PRETTY AND POISONOUS MUSHROOM



A large, colorful mushroom emerges from the ground, covered with numerous small whitish warts. *Amanita muscaria* is commonly called the fly agaric or fly amanita because for centuries it was used by some Europeans as an insecticide when sprinkled in milk. This mushroom is poisonous to eat, but we can still enjoy seeing its beautiful shape and colors in the forest. The young mushroom in this photo is in the button stage; soon a stalk will send it upward, and the cap will expand up to eight inches. These round caps vary from yellow to orange and red. Treat all wild mushrooms with caution, and never consume any mushroom unless you are confident about its identification and edibility.

FRESHWATER

WEATHERGUIDE CALENDAR: A SUSTAINABLE GIFT

Give your friends, family, employees and clients a sustainable gift they will appreciate all year – the 2025 Minnesota Weatherguide Environment Calendar™ and Almanac. Recycle when the year is done, or frame the photos to hang on the wall or give as gifts!

We also offer fundraising opportunities, including online and in-person sales that can earn your group up to \$10 for every calendar sold. Many schools, churches, lake associations and other groups have raised hundreds of dollars to support their activities and programs. Weatherguides are an easy sell (you know – you've got one in your hands!), and they support Freshwater's work. It's fundraising that benefits you and the environment.

Contact us at freshwater@freshwater.org to learn more.

OCTOBER PHENOLOGY

Jim Gilbert's Nature Notes

First week of October

Muskrats are busy building their domed-shaped winter lodges in marshes and ponds, using cattails and other vegetation. Large mature sugar maples display big patches of red and burnt-orange foliage, and golden-yellow is seen on green ashes. Fall leaf colors peak in northern Minnesota.

On October 1, 2023, a high temperature of 92 degrees became the warmest October temperature on record for the Twin Cities. The Twin Cities Marathon was cancelled because of heat threat. Some people enjoyed a late season lake swim or waterskiing.

Second week of October

Migrating warblers, juncos and other birds make good use of birdbaths. Garden annuals such as marigolds, zinnias, alyssum, impatiens, begonias and geraniums are still blooming nicely. Beavers are busy cutting trees for winter food, which consists mainly of bark from branches of aspens, alders, birches, maples and willows. Fall leaf colors peak around this time in central Minnesota. In the north, snowshoe hares have begun turning white, and black bears usually head for winter dens between September 24 and October 24.

On October 9, 2023, a new world record pumpkin weighing 2,745 pounds was judged at the 50th annual Safeway World Championship held at Half Moon Bay, California. This record pumpkin was grown in Minnesota by Travis Gienger, horticulture teacher at Anoka Technical College.

Third week of October

Brussels sprouts, broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower and leaf lettuce keep growing in cool weather. Corn combining continues; most field corn is harvested when the moisture is down to about 15 percent of its weight. Minnesota ranks fourth in corn production in the U.S.; Iowa is first, Illinois second and Nebraska third. Along the North Shore of Lake Superior, fall colors persist with the golden yellows of paper birches and quaking aspens, and the bright reds of pin cherry and bush honeysuckle leaves.

October 17, 2023, was the peak of fall leaf colors for the Twin Cities area from St. Cloud over to Taylors Falls, and south to St. Peter, Northfield and Red Wing. The peak considers the many trees, shrubs and vines that provide us with the color-splashed landscape each autumn.

Fourth week of October

Bitternut hickory and quaking aspen trees are glowing golden-yellow, wild grape leaves are sunny yellow and oaks have a variety of deep reds and rich browns. Tamarack

trees display smoky-gold needles. A massive leaf drop is on the way. Apple growers continue to pick late season types such as Haralson, Regent, Fireside, Keepsake and Prairie Spy. More than 100 varieties of apples are grown in Minnesota, each with its own special texture and taste.

Fifth week of October

Go for a walk in the autumn woods to savor the scents released by crushed leaves. Northern shovelers, American wigeons and northern pintails are migrating ducks now coming through.

Minnesota's sugar beet farmers, concentrated in the Red River Valley and in and around Renville County, reported great harvest yields in 2023. Minnesota growers produce about a third of the nation's overall crop of sugar beets. Rutabagas and parsnips sweetened by frost can be dug for delicious eating or stored for winter use. Leopard frogs are heading for lakes and ponds where they will hibernate in the bottom sand or mud through the winter.

October 29, 2023, was the last picking of late-season apples such as Red Haralson, Keepsake and Fireside. The next day, 1.8 inches of snow fell in the Twin Cities.



MARJIE CARR-OXLEY | MASS EXODUS | GRANTSBURG, WI

LOOK FOR ...



Peak day for autumn foliage colors (Twin Cities):

2023	Oct. 17
2022	Oct. 7
2021	Oct. 21
2020	Oct. 8
2019	Oct. 17
2018	Oct. 14
2017	Oct. 14
2016	Oct. 14
2015	Oct. 14
2014	Oct. 14

