

13 MOONS OF THE ANISHINAABE YEAR

by John Roterman

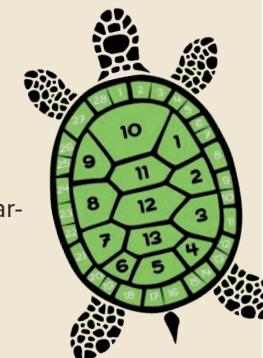
The Anishinaabe calendar uses a lunar-based system of 13 moons with 28 days each, totaling 364 days each year – unlike the Gregorian calendar, which uses a solar-based system of 365 days.

The month names signify natural observations and seasonal activities taking place. There are regional differences between Minnesota's Ojibwe Anishinaabe names of months due to the differences in location and climate that coincide with various seasonal activities. The Ojibwe Anishinaabe calendar also has the distinction of having 13 moons. The thirteenth moon of the year is sometimes called the Blue Moon, representing a fictional month named Undecember. These moons are often illustrated as the top shell of a turtle with 13 plates, surrounded by 28 smaller plates to represent days of the month.

Examples of traditional moon names*

English Month	Anishinaabemowin	Canadian Anishinaabemowin
January	Gichimanidoo-giizis (Great Spirit Moon)	Mnido Giizis (Spirit Moon)
February	Namebinini-giizis (Suckerfish Moon)	Mkwa Giizis (Bear Moon)
March	Onaaboni-giizis (Hard Crust on the Snow Moon)	Ziissbaakdoke Giizis (Sugar Moon)
April	Iskigamizige-giizis (Sap Boiling Moon)	Namebine Giizis (Sucker Moon)
May	Zaagibagaa-giizis (Budding Moon)	Waawaaskone Giizis (Flower Moon)
June	Odeimini-giizis (Strawberry Moon)	Ode'miin Giizis (Strawberry Moon)
July	Minike-giizis (Berry Harvesting Moon)	Mskomini Giizis (Raspberry Moon)
August	Manoominake-giizis (Wild Rice Harvest Moon)	Datkaagmin Giizis (Thimbleberry moon)
September	Waatabagaa-giizis (Leaves Changing Color Moon)	Mdaamiin Giizis (Corn Moon)
October	Binaakkwi-giizis (Falling Leaves Moon)	Biinaakwe Giizis (Falling Leaves Moon)
November	Gashkadino-giizis (Freezes Over Moon)	Mshkawji Giizis (Freezing Moon)
December	Manidoo-giizis (Little Spirit Moon)	Mnidoons Giizis Oonhg (Little Spirit Moon)
Undecember	Ozhaawashko-giizis (Blue Moon)	Mnidoons Giizis (Big Spirit Moon)

*These represent just a few of the vast array of monthly names originating from many different Tribal traditions across the region.



OCTOBER PHENOLOGY

Jim Gilbert's Nature Notes

First week of October

Any day, we can anticipate frost and ice on birdbaths. White-tailed deer wear their gray-brown winter coats. Muskrats build their mounded shelters in permanent ponds. More painted turtles are up sunning on logs now that the water temperatures are dropping. Southern Minnesota farmers have begun combining corn. Leaves of red maple and Ohio buckeye trees have turned red. A rough grouse may be seen fanning its tail, a territorial sign in the fall.

October 10, 2024: High of 80 degrees in the Twin Cities and area. Zinnias, lantana, diplodenia, impatiens, black and blue salvia and more continued blooming nicely in gardens.

Second week of October

Look for first white-tailed deer buck rubs on small trees. Short-tailed weasels are turning from brown to white, as are snowshoe hares in northern Minnesota.

John Burroughs, 19th century American naturalist and writer, described October as "the time of the illuminated woods." There may not be an illuminated woods near you, but all throughout Minnesota and the Upper Midwest you can find illuminated trees and pockets with fall colors. Some people feel a sense of urgency to get out into the country before the colors fade and the deciduous trees drop their leaves.

In the Twin Cities area, find great views of autumn colors on a drive from Highway 95 into Stillwater and to Taylors Falls, or Highway 7 from Hopkins to St. Bonifacius, or through the University of Minnesota Landscape Arboretum.

October 15, 2024: In fringe areas of the Twin Cities metro area, the temperature hit 30 degrees or a bit lower, and steam fog was rising from lakes and ponds. There was frost in low areas and on rooftops, and the first ice on birdbaths.

Third week of October

Sugar maples display burnt-orange, red and yellow leaves, eastern cottonwoods show golden-yellow foliage and wild grape vines have sunny-yellow leaves. Autumn Blaze maple trees are a hybrid red and maple/silver maple known for their gorgeous bright red leaf color, now seen from Grand Marais and Duluth to southern Minnesota.

October 18, 2024: In Pine City and north to Ely, tamarack trees showed smoky-gold fall foliage color at its peak.

October 20, 2024: Overall peak for fall colors in Lake Waconia, Lake Minnetonka and the Twin Cities area, along with Northfield and Faribault, St. Peter, Taylors Falls and west to St. Cloud.

Fourth week of October

Deciduous forests have started to look bare but some areas still have great fall colors. Quaking aspens, eastern cottonwoods and honey locust trees still have much golden-yellow foliage. American bittersweet vines have lost their leaves but have very attractive clusters of bright orange fruit.

Watch for big rafts of migrating American coots on some lakes. Franklin's gulls and ring-billed gulls follow farmers doing fall tillage. The gulls pick up worms and other small animals in the soil. Orchardists are still picking Fireside, Haralson, Honeygold, Regent and SnowSweet apples.

October 30, 2024: Last of year snowy tree crickets calling.

October 31, 2024: First snowfall in Twin Cities and area. It rained early, and then two to four inches of snow turned the landscape white.



Peak day for autumn foliage colors (Twin Cities):

2024	Oct. 20
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



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