



Fallen Leaves

The 2023 Series

Mark D. Fairchild

Introduction

However, especially in the autumn, color does continue to evolve after leaves have fallen, so a 2023 series of images of “fallen leaves” is in the works.

-Mark D. Fairchild, *Munsell Trees: A Season of Leaves and Colors*, RIT Press, p.171, 2024

The photographs in *Munsell Trees* were all made using leaves picked directly from the trees in order to best represent the appearance of trees through the season. As noted above, fallen leaves, gathered from the ground, can exhibit a different range and progression of colors. The images in this collection, represent fallen leaves collected from the ground during the autumn of 2023.

The photographs were made using the same techniques described in *Munsell Trees* and are presented in chronological order of their collection date. Many, though not all, of the leaves come from the same trees included in *Munsell Trees*. Accompanying each image is a quote from Henry David Thoreau’s essay, *Autumnal Tints* (originally published in *Atlantic Monthly* in October 1862). The quotes are also presented in chronological order as they appeared in *Autumnal Tints* and the page numbers (from the Applewood Books 1996 edition) are noted with each quote to aid in locating them in the original essay.

I hope you enjoy this bonus supplemental material along with the original *Munsell Trees* book. It can be considered an addition chapter, published electronically.

Thanks for viewing (and reading).

-MDF, Honeoye Falls, NY (Dec. 2024)

09:06:2023 River Birch

Most appear to confound changed leaves with withered ones, as if they were to confound ripe apples with rotten ones. I think that the change to some higher color in a leaf is an evidence that it has arrived at a late and perfect maturity, answering to the maturity of fruits.

-Henry David Thoreau, Autumnal Tints (6)



09:06:2023 Sugar Maple



Flowers are but colored leaves, fruits but ripe ones.

-Henry David Thoreau, Autumnal Tints (7)

09:17:2023 Sugar Maple

October is the month for painted leaves. Their rich glow now flashes round the world. As fruits and leaves and the day itself acquire a bright tint just before they fall, so the year near its setting. October is the sunset sky; November the later twilight.

-Henry David Thoreau, Autumnal Tints (8)



09:17:2023 Tuliptree



We love to see any redness in the vegetation of the temperate zone. It is the color of colors. This plant speaks to our blood. It asks a bright sun on it to make it show to best advantage, and it must be seen at this season of the year.

-Henry David Thoreau, Autumnal Tints (12)

10:04:2023 Kanzan Cherry

Some single trees, wholly bright scarlet, seen against others of their kind still freshly green, or against evergreens, are more memorable than whole groves will be by-and-by.

-Henry David Thoreau, Autumnal Tints (20)



10:04:2023 River Birch



How beautiful, when a whole tree is like one great scarlet fruit full of ripe juices, every leaf, from the lowest limb to the topmost spire, all aglow, especially if you look toward the sun!

-Henry David Thoreau, Autumnal Tints (20)

10:04:2023 Sugar Maple



*Its leaves have been asking from time to time in a whisper,
"When shall we redden?"*

-Henry David Thoreau, Autumnal Tints (21)



10:06:2023 Sassafras

Look at yonder swamp. Of Maples mixed with Pines, at the base of a Pine-clad hill, a quarter of a mile off, so that you get the full effect of the bright colors, without detecting the imperfections of the leaves, and see their yellow, scarlet, and crimson fires, of all tints, mingled and contrasted with the green.

-Henry David Thoreau, Autumnal Tints (23)

10:06:2023 Red Oak

I see some fifty rods off toward the sun ... the most intensely brilliant scarlet, orange, and yellow equal to any flowers or fruits or any tints ever painted.

-Henry David Thoreau, Autumnal Tints (24)



10:18:2023 American Elm



By the sixth of October the leaves generally begin to fall, in successive showers, after frost or rain; but the principal leaf-harvest, the acme of Fall, is commonly about the sixteenth.

-Henry David Thoreau, Autumnal Tints (27)

10:18:2023 Dogwood

Some trees, as small Hickories, appear to have dropped their leaves instantaneously ... and ... being bright yellow still, though withered, reflect a blaze of light from the ground where they lie.

-Henry David Thoreau, Autumnal Tints (27)



10:18:2023 Pignut Hickory



The streets are thickly strewn with the trophies, and fallen Elm-leaves make a dark brown pavement under our feet.

-Henry David Thoreau, Autumnal Tints (28)

10:18:2023 Red Maple

*The leaves of the late Red Maples, still bright, strew the earth,
often crimson-spotted on a yellow ground, like some wild apples.*

-Henry David Thoreau, Autumnal Tints (28)



10:18:2023 **Sassafras**



Birds'-nests, in the Huckleberry and other shrubs, and in trees, are already being filled with withered leaves. So many have fallen in the woods, that a squirrel cannot find after a falling nut without being heard. Boys are raking them in the streets, if only for the pleasure of dealing with such clean crisp substances.

-Henry David Thoreau, Autumnal Tints (29)

10:18:2023 Sugar Maple

When I go to the river the day after the principal fall of leaves, the sixteenth, I find my boat all covered, bottom and seats, with the leaves of the Golden Willow under which it is moored, and I set sail with a cargo of them rustling under my feet.

-Henry David Thoreau, Autumnal Tints (30)





10:18:2023 White Oak

What strong medicinal, but rich, scents from the decaying leaves! The rain falling on the freshly dried herbs and leaves, and filling in the pools and ditches into which they have dropped thus clean and rigid, will soon convert them into tea,— green, black, brown, and yellow teas, of all degrees of strength, enough to set all Nature a gossiping.

-Henry David Thoreau, Autumnal Tints (32)

10:31:2023 Dogwood

The frost touches them, and, with the slightest breath of returning day or jarring of the earth's axle, see in what showers they come floating down! The ground is all party-colored with them.

-Henry David Thoreau, Autumnal Tints (34)





10:31:2023 Kanzan Cherry

It is pleasant to walk over the beds of these fresh, crisp, and rustling leaves. How beautifully they go to their graves! how gently lay themselves down and turn to mould!— painted of a thousand hues, and fit to make beds of us living.

-Henry David Thoreau, Autumnal Tints (34)

10:31:2023 Redbud

That they soared so loftily, how contentedly they return to dust again, and are laid low, resigned to lie and decay at the foot of the tree, and afford nourishment to a new generation of their kind, as well as to flutter on high! They teach us how to die.

-Henry David Thoreau, Autumnal Tints (35)





10:31:2023 Red Oak

When the leaves fall, the whole earth is a cemetery pleasant to walk on. I love to wander and muse over them in their graves.

-Henry David Thoreau, Autumnal Tints (35)

10:31:2023 River Birch

But think not that the splendor of the year is over; for as one leaf does not make summer, neither does one falling leaf make an autumn.

-Henry David Thoreau, Autumnal Tints (36)



10:31:2023 Sugar Maple



If you want a different shade or tint of a particular color, you have only to look farther within or without the tree or the wood. These leaves are not many dipped in one dye, as at the dye-house, but they are dyed in light of infinitely various degrees of strength, and left to set and dry there.

-Henry David Thoreau, Autumnal Tints (40)

10:31:2023 Tuliptree

I do not see why, since America and her autumn woods have been discovered, our leaves should not compete with the precious stones in giving names to colors; and, indeed, I believe that in the course of time the names of some of our trees and shrubs, as well as flowers, will get into our popular chromatic nomenclature.

-Henry David Thoreau, Autumnal Tints (41)





11:05:2023 Tuliptree *(Hogsmeade Giant)*

This October festival costs no powder, nor ringing of bells, but every tree is a living liberty-pole on which a thousand bright flags are waving.

-Henry David Thoreau, Autumnal Tints (42)

11:08:2023 Red Oak

Most go in and shut their doors, thinking that bleak and colorless November has already come, when some of the most brilliant and memorable colors are not yet lit.

-Henry David Thoreau, Autumnal Tints (51)





11:08:2023 Red Oak

Every such tree becomes a nucleus of red, as it were, where, with the declining sun, that color grows and glows. It is partly borrowed fire, gathering strength from the sun on its way to your eye. It has only comparatively dull red leaves for a rallying point, or kindling stuff, to start it, and it becomes an intense scarlet or red mist, or fire, which finds fuel for itself in the very atmosphere. So vivacious is redness.

-Henry David Thoreau, Autumnal Tints (54)

11:08:2023 Tuliptree

These bright leaves which I have mentioned are not the exception, but the rule; for I believe that all leaves, even grasses and mosses, acquire brighter colors just before their fall.

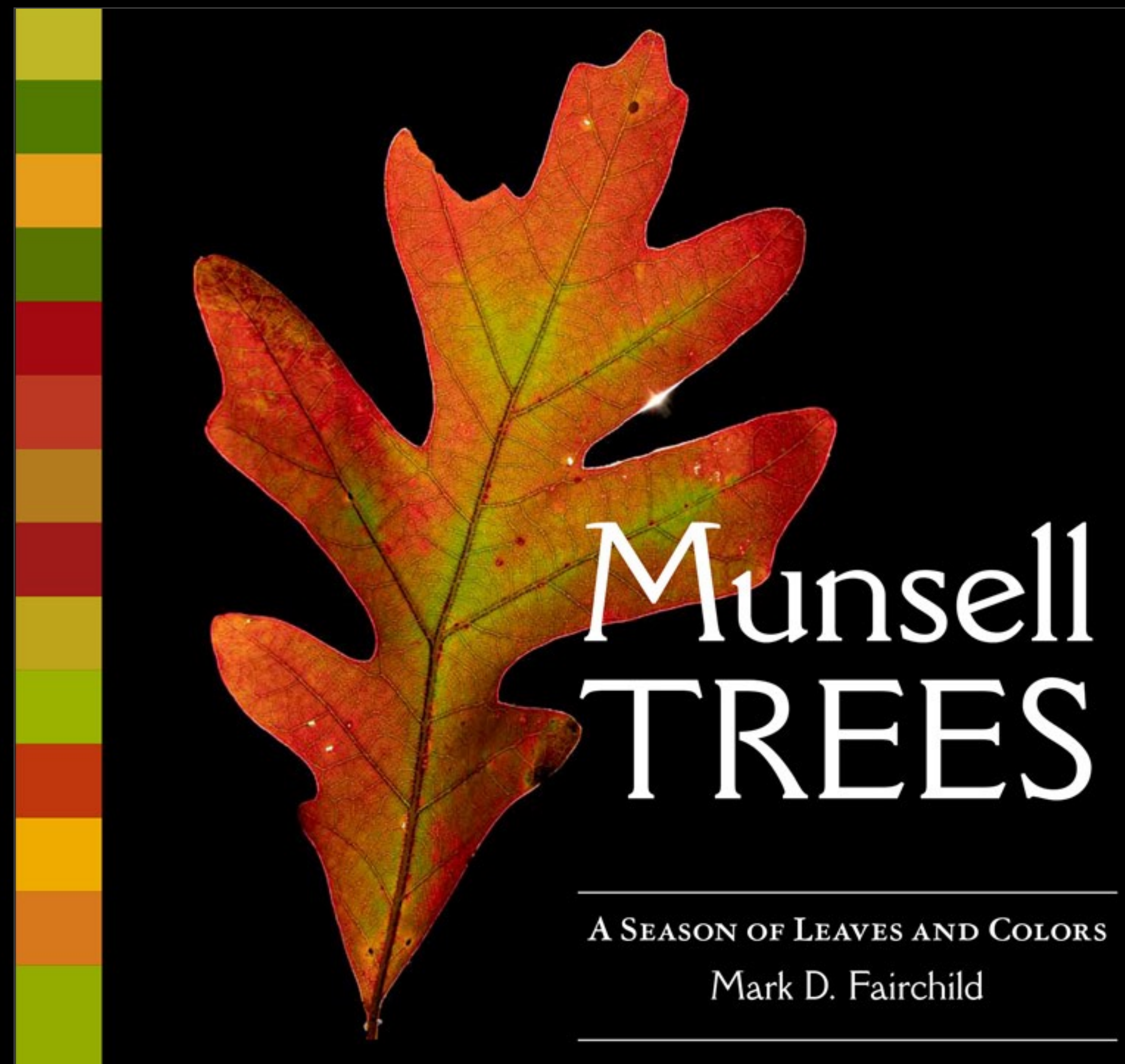
-Henry David Thoreau, Autumnal Tints (62)



11:05:2023 Tuliptree (*Hogsmeade Giant*)



The End ...



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