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## Best Trees for Fall Colors at WSU

By Bill Meyer, WSU Senior Groundskeeper (Retired)



As I am sitting here writing about viewing the trees this fall, I am reminded how hot and sweltering a mid-July summer day can get. But I know how quickly these lazy, hazy days of summer turn into the cool, crisp days of autumn. And here on the campus of WSU there is no better season to check out the trees than in September and October. With over 100 cultivars of trees on campus, there are leaves changing colors all the time. One can see trees proudly displaying their yellows, oranges, reds, browns, bronzes, and even purples. The best time to experience the fall colors on campus is on a Sunday morning. While the University rests from its usual hustle and bustle, a quiet peacefulness permeates the grounds. One feels like he or she is strolling through an arboretum looking at all the diverse trees.

So, what are the best trees for viewing fall colors on the WSU campus? Let's start with the Maples. They always are a knockout. Look for the 2 rows of Red Maples situated between Krueger Library and Minne Hall flaunting their reds and orange colors. Likewise, the Amur Maples have a similar colorful red leaf only smaller. They can be found on the southwest and northwest corner of the Gold parking lot just off Mark Street. The 'Autumn Blaze' Maple, which is a hybrid of the Silver Maple and the Red Maple, has its home in front of Somsen Hall, just east of the front steps. It is also known for its reds and orange colors.

Do you know how many different kinds of Maples grace the grounds of WSU? Eight different Maples! They include the Red Maple, Silver Maple, 'Autumn Blaze' Maple, Norway Maple, Amur Maple, Snakebark Maple, Mountain Maple, and the 3- Flowered Maple. We just lost our last Sugar Maple in a storm a few weeks ago.

O.K. So how about trees other than the Maples. Check out some of our awesome Ashes. In particular, notice the 'Autumn Purple' Ash with its most colorful and striking purple leaves. The 'Autumn Purple' Ash is scattered throughout the campus, but don't leave WSU without seeing the Ashes on the south side of Morey- Shepard residence hall. With the Emerald Ash Borer problems, these trees could be only a memory soon.

Another tree that has a nice fall color is the Tulip Tree. Located in the grassy island between Pasteur Hall and Gildemeister Hall, the tuliped shaped leaves of the Tulip Tree turn a deep, rich bronzy brown in October. When the winds of late fall begin to blow in earnest, the large leaves can be found quite a distance from this unique tree. One can always trace them back to WSU's only Tulip Tree.

One of my favorites is the 'Shawnee Brave' Bald Cypress. In the fall this deciduous conifer has needles that have a bronzy orange or copper like appearance. The needle-like leaves eventually fall off by early winter. Also, notice the exfoliating, shedding red bark.

Hopefully, this has given you a flavor of what to see this fall at WSU. There are many more trees to see and appreciate. Also, don't forget the west campus. On the back side of the Tau Center near the fire pit, look for the London Planetree, the Sour Gum, and our very own Wahoo tree. Yahoo! That's all for now.

*Autumn Purple Ash*



*Kentucky Coffee Tree*



*Northern Catalpa*



*Ornamental Pear*



*Tulip Tree*

