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UNH Expert Expects Dazzling Foliage

By *Sharon Keeler*
UNH News Bureau

September 8, 2000

DURHAM, N.H. -- While New England's trees put on a colorful show each autumn, chances are excellent that this year's display will be quite spectacular, thanks, in part, to a lackluster summer.

"We had a lot of rain, and there were no major leaf disease problems or insect infestations," says Bob Edmonds, program leader for forestry and wildlife at the University of New Hampshire Cooperative Extension. "The trees are stress-free, which sets up the perfect conditions for a beautiful foliage season."

The weather throughout September, says Edmonds, is actually more crucial to good foliage. Bright, sunny, cool days bring out the brightest colors.

When days shorten and light diminishes, chlorophyll, the green pigment which enables trees to capture sunlight and convert it to energy, decreases. Carotenoids, pigments which produce the red, orange and yellow colors, are present in leaves throughout the season, but only become visible when the green color fades.

Edmonds says that New England's foliage, which is always "brilliant and resilient" offers people an ample season to enjoy the display. Swamp maples are already beginning to show shades of red. Trees up north should reach their full beauty toward the end of the month, with peak season in the south hitting around Columbus Day.

Edmonds' New Hampshire "hot spots" include the Connecticut River Valley, the Lyme- Orford area, Alstead and the White Mountains. "Eighty-four percent of our state is forests, so the foliage will be hard to miss," he says. "My advice is to travel the backroads, and enjoy the state's historic homes. These houses are often surrounded by beautiful sugar maples. It's a thrill to see."

For more information on New Hampshire's foliage outlook, contact Bob Edmonds at 862-2619, or call

**the following UNH Cooperative Extension educators
for a county perspective:**

Coos: Sam Stoddard, 788-4961

Grafton: Nory Parr, 787-6944

Hillsboro: John Nute, 673-2510

Merrimack: Tim Fleury, 796-2151

Rockingham: Phil Auger, 679-5616

Strafford: Don Black, 749-4445

Sullivan: Steve Wood, 863-9200

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