

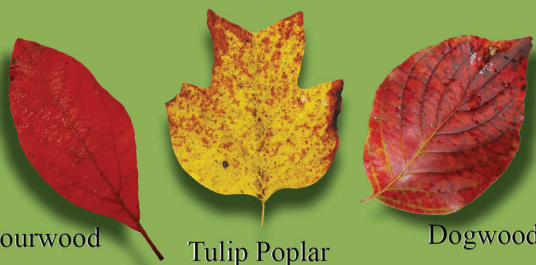
Fall Foliage

Since different tree species display their own unique colors each fall, the Parkway becomes a collage of autumn hues. See how many of these autumn leaves you can find as you travel along the painted trails and Parkway this fall.



Maples

Oaks



Sourwood

Tulip Poplar

Dogwood



Sassafras

*We hope you enjoy your journey along the Blue Ridge Parkway.
Since nature's painted landscape varies from visit to visit and
vista to vista, be sure to return often.*



TRACK and KIP
want You to become a
Trail TRACKer

Thank you for joining us on the trail today. We want you to join the Trail **TRACKer** Team. It's fun, healthy and free. Best of all, by keeping TRACK of your trails on our website, you can earn prizes. For more information about the Trail TRACKer Team, other TRACK Trail adventures near you, or for general information about the **Kids in Parks** program, please visit our website at:

www.kidsinparks.com

The TRACK Trail program is part of the larger **Kids in Parks** initiative sponsored by the Blue Ridge Parkway Foundation, the Blue Ridge Parkway and the Blue Cross Blue Shield of North Carolina Foundation. Working together with partners throughout the community, our mission is to increase physical activity of children and their families, to improve nutritional choices, and to get kids outdoors and along the Blue Ridge Parkway.



The Blue Ridge Parkway...
your home, for your health and your heritage.



BlueCross BlueShield
of North Carolina

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Foundation



Blue Ridge Parkway Foundation



Fall Foliage: Nature's Painted Landscape

Every fall, millions of people flock to the Blue Ridge Parkway to see the beautiful colors of fall's foliage: nature's painted landscape.

The Blue Ridge Parkway has 469 miles of uninterrupted road, approximately 350 miles of hiking trails, over 200 overlooks and countless vistas. This access, coupled with the numerous species of deciduous trees, makes the Blue Ridge Parkway one of the best places in the world to witness fall colors.

*This brochure will guide you, whether by car or by foot, through the
natural processes that paint the Blue Ridge Mountains
into an unforgettable landscape.*

Plants and trees need four things to survive: sunlight, water, soil, and carbon dioxide. Inside their leaves, plants have tiny “factories” where they combine nutrients from the soil and the other ingredients to make food in a process known as *photosynthesis*. These food factories produce a sugar called glucose. The engine that powers the factories is chlorophyll, the chemical that makes plants appear green.

In the fall, shortening days and cooler nights send signals to deciduous trees that it’s time to get ready to shed their leaves for winter. They do this by restricting the flow of water and nutrients to their leaves. This forces their factories to shut down; and, without green chlorophyll, the leaves begin to reveal their hidden colors before falling off.

ENJOY
THE VIEW.
WATCH THE
ROAD.

The Rangers remind us all to use the pullouts and overlooks when taking in the splendor of fall; and, to keep your eyes on the road while driving for the safety of us all.



Chloro-Filled

Some plants, called evergreens, have special adaptations in their leaves that allow them to keep their chlorophyll and remain green all year. For example, pine trees have long, thin “needle” leaves that are filled with a resin that resists freezing and covered with a wax that helps prevent water loss.

Since evergreens can protect their chlorophyll from winter conditions, they do not need to shed their needles every fall.

How many different types of evergreens can you find?



Hidden Hues

As chlorophyll disappears, the pigments responsible for making leaves turn yellow (xanthophyll) or orange (carotene) are revealed. Because these pigments were already in the leaf, and were just masked by the darker green chlorophyll, the yellow and orange hues of fall remain fairly constant from year to year. See how many different shaped yellow and orange leaves you can find as you travel the Parkway.



Sugary-Saps React

When days shorten, a barrier (abscission layer) forms between the leaf stem and branch trapping sugars in the leaf. These sugars react with bright sunlight producing a sappy-sugary substance called anthocyanin. Anthocyanins are responsible for the brilliant red colors we see every fall. The intensity of the fall’s red colors varies dramatically depending on weather. The most vibrant autumn reds are produced when dry, sunny days are followed by cool, dry nights.

The Painted Parkway

Photo courtesy of Hugh Morton (Grandfather Mountain)