

HOME & GARDEN

SECTION D • QUAD-CITY TIMES • SUNDAY, OCTOBER 2, 2011

DO YOU HAVE SINGER MEMORIES?

The Singer sewing machine company is celebrating its 160th anniversary and inviting people to share stories about their Singer machine and sewing experiences by logging them at mysingerstory.com.

And if you own an antique Singer, you can search for information about when and where your machine was made by typing in its serial number.

Anyone using the website will be registered to win one of the company's commemorative machines, available in 2012, that will have innovative features but look old, with the iconic antique design.

Singer introduced several innovations in the sewing machine business, including the first portable machine, the first zig-zag and the first computer-controlled machine.



YOU CAN BUILD A SCARECROW

The month-long Pumpkin Extravaganza at the Quad-City Botanical Center in Rock Island opens today with scarecrow building from 1 to 4 p.m. All supplies will be provided, one set per family, while supplies last. The scarecrows will then be displayed in the garden through the month.

In addition, Sunday is "Wild West Day," with horseshoes, free sheriff's badges, a hay bale maze, face painting and crafts.

The cost is \$5 for adults, \$4 for senior citizens, \$3 for children 6-12 years old and \$1 for children 2-5 years old, or you may purchase a \$20 "pumpkin pass" that will admit two parents and any dependent children for the entire month.

The center is at 2525 4th Ave. For more information, call (309) 794-0991 or visit qcgardens.com.

NOW YOU KNOW MORE ABOUT FALL COLORS

Compiled by Alma Gaul, agaul@qctimes.com, and Nate Bloomquist, nbloomquist@qctimes.com. Wanna know more about something? Email newsroom@qctimes.com



John Schultz/QUAD-CITY TIMES

Fall colors emerge along the bank Mississippi River in LeClaire, Iowa, in 2009. For the best look at the annual fall foliage show, follow the rivers.

WHY AND WHEN COLORS CHANGE

Old summers don't die, they just explode into color — the bright yellows, oranges, reds and purples of our annual Midwest fall foliage show.

The performance is under way now and will peak in various spots until the end of October.

The northern halves of Iowa and Illinois are expected to experience peak colors about Saturday, Oct. 8, with the southern halves being most colorful a week or so later, according to each state's Department of Natural Resources. The question of why leaves change color is complicated, but it basically goes like this:

All leaves contain chlorophyll, the green pigment that is critical in photosynthesis, which allows plants to obtain energy from sunlight to make food.

In early fall — as a response to the shorter days and declining intensity of sunlight — chlorophyll production slows down, then stops,

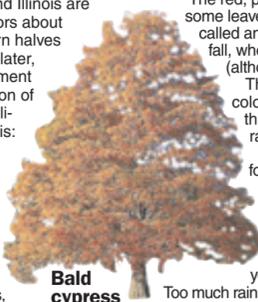
and eventually all of it is destroyed. That is when the carotenoids, the yellow and gold colors always present in leaves, are unmasked and show themselves. They were there all along — in July, for example — but you couldn't see them.

The red, purple and crimson colors you see in some leaves are produced by a different pigment called anthocyanin, and that is not present until fall, when warm, bright days favor its production (although not in all trees).

That's why you get the most intense color when the days are clear and sunny, the nights are cool (but not freezing) and rainfall has been ideal.

Predicting color is dicey, and many foresters refuse to do it because it depends upon so many factors — not only the weather in autumn but also spring and summer.

Colors generally continue until the first hard frost, which varies from year to year and can drastically shorten a season. Too much rain can blow the show, too.



Bald cypress

Q-C AREA FOLIAGE HOT SPOTS



When looking for fall color, the best advice is "follow the rivers."

Illinois

- 1 Black Hawk State Historic Site, Rock Island, which is noted for its oaks and hickories.
- 2 Travel Illinois 84 from the Quad-Cities on up to Mississippi Palisades State Park and beyond. The bluffs are heavy with the species of maple that produce the most spectacular color.
- 3 Galena, Ill., is always a good destination; for information about specific events and specials, call (800) 747-9377 or go to galena.org.

Iowa

- 1 Devils Glen Park, off Devils Glen Road, Bettendorf.
- 2 Follow the Mississippi north along U.S. 67, up toward Wisconsin.
- 3 Meander the state and county backroads in the bluff areas of Jackson County.

The main thing to remember about fall color is that you won't find much flying along an interstate highway. Instead, seek out the state and county highways and backroads, as well as city and county parks.

THE FIVE COLORFUL TREES IN THE QUAD-CITIES

For additional info about these trees and a couple more, click on this story at qctimes.com



Maple

Color differs by species. Some maples sport red leaves while others are orange-red or yellow. Maples produce some of this area's brightest color in natural areas as well as in landscape plantings.

Oak

Oaks turn brown-bronze, coppery-red or purplish. You can find them in natural areas as well as in landscape plantings. Black Hawk State Historic Site in Rock Island is a fine place to find oaks.

Ash

This native is under siege in many states east of here because of an invasive pest called the emerald ash borer that kills these trees, so enjoy them while you can. Ashes turn brilliant yellow, red or maroon-purple.

Staghorn sumac

This is a shrub, but needs to be in a list of fall color contributors because you can't miss its red leaves on hillsides. And although it's considered a shrub, it can grow to a height of 25 feet and 15 to 20 feet wide.

Ginkgo

The distinctive, fan-shaped leaves of this ancient tree (it dates to the time of the dinosaurs) turn yellow in fall. And after the first really hard frost, the leaves drop all at once. You won't find these in natural areas, but they are in landscapes here and there.

MORE INFORMATION ONLINE

IOWA: traveliowa.com. Click on the "fall colors"/leaves logo. You'll get color updates and suggestions for fall festivals/events and scenic byways to visit. Also, call (515) 233-4110 for a recorded message about fall colors.

ILLINOIS: enjoyillinois.com. Click on "fall color watch."

MINNESOTA: exploreminnesota.com. Type in "fall color" or scroll down to "Rainbow Routes: 10 fall color drives" and "Get the news on fall color hues."

WISCONSIN: travelwisconsin.com/fallcolor_report.aspx. Click on "view the fall color report."

NATION: weather.com/outlook/driving/fallfoliage/regionindex/central.

Gardeners having devil of a time!



Jerry Voelkers' "devil tomato"

Well, would you look at this! It's a "devil tomato," grown by Jerry Voelkers of Bettendorf.

The oddly shaped fruit was discovered by Jerry's wife, Bonnie, who thought, "Oh, my goodness, that is so weird!"

In doing some Internet research, Bonnie learned that the "horns" are akin to a birth defect on tomatoes, brought about by extended high temperatures of more than 90 degrees during the day and above 82-85 during the night.



Alma Gaul
HOMEFRONT

Dr. Joe Kemble of Auburn (Ala.) University, describes the phenomenon as a physiological/genetic disorder, something one can expect in one of every 1,000 plants.

Cells divide incorrectly and produce an extra locule, or cavity, within a part of the plant. Some tomatoes develop just one "horn" while some

develop several. The tomato shown here

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Budget revamp helps provide for the unexpected

We've learned some budgeting lessons since our air conditioner needed to be replaced over the summer and we didn't have an emergency savings account to cover the expense.

Before the A/C kicked the bucket, every extra penny we had went to home improvement. Clearly, that was not a good idea, so we have totally revamped our budget and spending habits to make sure we never have to



Stephanie De Pasquale
HOME ROOKIES

wonder again how we're going to pay for an unexpected expense.

For example, our next big project will be replacing the flooring in the common areas of the house with wood flooring. We've almost got enough in our savings account to purchase the materials for the project. But that same amount also would pay for a new furnace if ours stops working. So we're

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