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? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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AUTUMN COLORS

Autumn colors which begin to appear in September reach their height in October. Dry sunny falls usually give the richest displays of red and yellow foliage. Both dryness and cold seem to be responsible for the turning of the leaves. You forget to water your geranium, and the leaves will begin to turn yellow. Sometimes in midsummer you will see a partly broken branch on a tree beginning to assume fall colors, because it is gradually drying up. For this reason trees growing in dry locations are likely to show color early in the fall. On a mountain side, rocky ridges are likely to be streaked with color while the better watered ravines are still green.

But then why should swamps show some of the brightest colors of all? For one thing, the swamp maple which turns a brilliant red grows in wet places. Also, the earliest frosts occur in lowlands and pocket-like valleys where cold air collects. Early in the season from a mountain top you often locate a brook in the valley bottom by its borders of red and yellow trees. On a hillside, then, the first colors appear in the driest spots; in the lowlands they occur in the coldest locations, which are often also the dampest. In the case of mountains so high that there is a considerable decrease in temperature due to altitude, fall colors become general first above a certain level.

(Tomorrow: Climate and Colds)

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