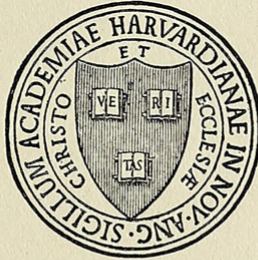


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The Arboretum is suffering from the severe drought of the last two months. September is reported to have been the driest in the last fifty-one years, and, in spite of the exceptionally heavy snowfall of the winter, the precipitation for the year is now some eight inches below the average. The result of this has been that the leaves which take on their autumn colors usually in early October have dried up and are already falling from many plants.

The Autumn Color of Leaves. It does not appear to be generally understood that the leaves on different individuals of the same species do not assume the same shades of color, and that there is considerable variation on different individuals in the time of change. This is well illustrated by the collection of Red Maples (*Acer rubrum*) in the Arboretum. From many of the plants the leaves have changed color and have already fallen; from others probably one-third of the leaves have fallen and on others the leaves are as fresh and green as they were in July, all the plants growing practically under the same conditions. The Red Maple tree across the drive and opposite the entrance to the Administration Building has been during the past week the most brilliant object in the Arboretum. Landscape gardeners who may wish to use trees and shrubs for autumn effects can find useful suggestions in this tree, for it has been raised from a graft taken from a tree with leaves of exceptionally brilliant autumn color. This exceptional color has been preserved, and indicates that it is possible to multiply by grafting plants with leaves of unusually brilliant autumn color just as it is possible to propagate trees with leaves abnormally marked with yellow or

otherwise abnormal, or with double or other unusual flowers, or with improved fruits. Little has yet been done anywhere to propagate trees with exceptionally brilliant autumn foliage, but the field is an interesting and an important one for the makers of autumn gardens. That the making of such gardens will sooner or later receive attention in this country there can be little doubt, for the pleasantest months of the year in eastern North America are the autumn months, and in no other part of the world is the autumn foliage so brilliant and varied, and nowhere else are the fruits of trees and shrubs more abundant, varied and interesting.

The "Flowering" Dogwoods. Among the smaller trees with scarlet or crimson autumn foliage none is more beautiful now than the so-called Flowering Dogwood (*Cornus florida*) which is unusually brilliant this year in its shades of crimson, scarlet and green. Its autumn beauty is increased by the contrast of the color on the upper and lower surfaces of the leaves for only the upper surface changes color, the lower surface retaining the pale sometimes nearly white color of the summer. For regions with a winter climate as severe as that of eastern Massachusetts the eastern Asiatic relative (*Cornus kousa*) of the native Flowering Dogwood is a more reliable plant. It is a smaller tree than the eastern American plant; the leaves turn as brilliantly in the autumn; the flower-buds are not killed or injured by the severest cold of our winters, and open from two to three weeks later, and the floral bracts which surround the clusters of small flowers and are the conspicuous feature of the inflorescence are narrower, further apart and pointed, not broad and rounded, at the apex. The fruit is even handsomer than that of the American plant for the individual fruits are united into a globose scarlet head which is raised on a long slender erect stem and are not, like those of the American plant, in clusters of separate fruits. The form discovered and introduced by Wilson from western China promises to be even a better plant in this climate than the Japanese form, for it appears to be equally hardy, and the floral bracts are larger and overlap below the middle, forming a cup like those of the American species. This plant is still rare, but as it produces good crops of seeds in the Arboretum it is to be hoped that it will soon be within the reach of lovers of handsome hardy trees.

The Sassafras. There is now no more beautiful tree on the margins of New England woods and by New England roadsides than the Sassafras, as the leaves have turned or are turning orange or yellow more or less tinged with red. The autumn colors of several trees are more brilliant but none of them equal the Sassafras in the warmth and delicacy of their autumn dress. The Sassafras is a handsome tree at other seasons of the year. In winter it is conspicuous by its deeply furrowed, dark cinnamon-gray bark and slender light green branchlets; in early spring before the leaves appear it is covered with innumerable clusters of small bright yellow flowers which make it at that season a conspicuous and delightful object. The leaves are thick, dark green and lustrous above, paler below, and vary remarkably in shape as they are sometimes deeply three-lobed at the apex and sometimes entire without a trace of lobes. The fruit is a bright blue berry sur-



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