



## How we know autumn is here

by Ralph Miller

The past five weeks or so has been a season of great change, variety and interest. When does the thought of autumn first intrude upon one's consciousness? Some might say - "When football season begins" - others - "When the stores display the Fall clothes" - but I suggest for most of us it is subconsciously when those first cool evening come upon us, when the first few leaves ahead of their time take on autumn hues, and a dozen similar signs.

For myself, I can not be sure of what it was. Warm days, cool nights. A few stray red leaves on the dogwood. Then a hot lazy afternoon with just a few bees buzzing about and some assorted insects flying over the flower borders, with idle thoughts rambling about one's head interrupted suddenly by the sight of the erratic flight of a pale tattered butterfly, a Tiger swallowtail, to be sure. They have been abundant all summer in their bright black and yellow colors. But this one is different. It is only a pale ghost of itself now. Its wings are ragged and tattered, both tails are gone, and its colors are pale and faded, as if signalling the end of the season for itself. However three or four Monarch butterflies, richly garbed in black and deep orange-red and with a few white spots at the tops of their wings, soar and flap strongly about. So why the great contrast? Then we are reminded that this Monarch, which has extraordinary powers of flight, in summer broods over most of the continent well into Canada, but with the coming of autumn begins a great migration southward in streams much like our migrating birds. Monarch butterflies have been sighted hundreds of miles out at sea.

And around the same time, but on another day, the blue jays, cardinals, and mocking birds seem to very conspicuous and noisy all of a sudden. As we listen we become aware of the absence of familiar voices, those of catbirds and robins.

A search the next day or two reveals they have left on their southward migration

and if, in succeeding weeks, an occasional robin appears, and we notice it is silent and seemingly shy, it is probable that these robins are transients from further north on their own southward journeys.

As if to add final proof that another season is at hand, during the past week we have watched wood warblers passing through on the way to their winter quarters, the southern United States and Central and South America. One group consisted of black-throated green, bay-breasted and magnolia warblers with a few young cardinals and a red-breasted nuthatch thrown in for company. One can only be amazed at the seemingly limitless energy of these tiny birds as they ceaselessly flit about the branches, suddenly launching out into the air to catch a passing insect or flitting over branches and twigs, sometimes right side up and again upside down. We wonder how they can complete some of those journeys which stretch out into thousands of miles.

After the blight of the first real cool nights and days when some of the flowers have faded away, there seems to be a rejuvenation in the garden with a reflowering of plants thought finished, such as pinks and sweet williams.

Another portent - the squirrels collecting their harvest for the winter. Over a period of three or four weeks, I collected four trash cans full of trash from the walnut tree outside the kitchen porch, half of which consisted of the hulls and shells of walnuts, some only slightly nibbled at or bitten into. No, we didn't get any walnuts ourselves. To add insult to injury, many a time as we stooped to gather the leavings, there was a constant rain of pieces of hulls and shells, as if the squirrels had deliberately moved into position overhead and had thrown down the debris to warn us the walnuts belonged to them. For a while it was worth one's life to pass under the oak on the other side of the house for they pelted down a veritable shower of acorns.

## Autumn nature show to start at Lake Aldred

With the arrival of fall, Pennsylvania Power & Light Company invites the public to enjoy the color of the season at its Lake Aldred recreation area nature trails.

Located on the lower Susquehanna River, in Lancaster and York Counties, Lake Aldred is the site of a hydroelectric station operated by PP&L. The Public recreation areas are operated as a spin-off to this

operation.

Lake Aldred offers three major hiking trails for photography, sightseeing and nature study:

\*Otter Creek Nature Trail on the York County side of the Susquehanna River, traverses a region that is both historic and picturesque.

\*Pequea Creek Nature Trail offers another excel-

lent opportunity for nature study and observation of the changing foliage. This trail is about one-half mile long and is connected to the Charcoal Trail which is also about a half mile long.

\*Kellys Run Trail is about 1-3/4 miles long and leads through more rugged terrain. It's designed for the more experienced hiker. The scenic reward will be

well worth the effort taken to traverse this trail, especially at this time of year.

Arch Knisely, PP&L's Community Affairs manager said, "Information on all the facilities at Lake Aldred along with trail maps can be obtained from the office of George Aukamp, Lake Aldred superintendent or Otter Creek and Pequea Creek park directors."



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