

This week's rain to prompt red and gold autumn in Upstate

By Jennifer Crossley Howard

Monday, October 10, 2011

ANDERSON — About an inch of rain is forecast through Wednesday, which is a necessity for trees to retain their leaves and turn red and gold.

There is a 90 percent chance of rain today and a 70 percent chance tonight.

"We probably will see some clearing on Wednesday, and we're really not carrying a significant chance of rain on Thursday and Friday," said Bryan McAvoy, a meteorologist at the National Weather Service.

Today's high will be 64 degrees with a low of 55; Wednesday will have a high of 76 and a low of 55.

A cold front comes through Thursday morning, but a warm air mass following it will drive up the day's high to 79 degrees, McAvoy said.

As much as 3 inches of rain and gale-force winds were expected along the South Carolina coast Monday night, the Associated Press reported.

Flooding is not expected, but winds will spread rain farther inland.

"That more than anything is going to raise water levels along the coast," McAvoy said.

If Anderson receives an inch of rain this week, it will be on its way to attaining a 3.11-inch monthly average. No rain has been recorded at the Anderson Regional Airport this month, McAvoy said.

Hartwell Lake stood at 652.34 feet Monday, almost half a foot lower than a week ago, according to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Lake Jocassee was 23 feet below full pool, 4 feet lower than last week. Lake Keowee dropped a foot to 4 feet below full pool.

Trees need moisture to keep their leaves, which will soon change colors if a mixture of sunny warm days and cool nights persist. While New England is well-known for its vivid fall scenery, its season for viewing fall leaves lasts only two weeks, said Marion Edmonds, spokesman for the South Carolina Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism.

South Carolinians have almost a month to ride state highways and marvel at fall foliage. A mixture of high and low elevations throughout means a longer viewing time, Edmonds said.

"For so many South Carolinians this is the most pleasant time of year," hesaid. "We all go through the summer and, as much as we love South Carolina, there's a point where we've had enough."

Scenic Highway 11, which runs through Westminster and Walhalla, is a good place to see fall colors, expected to peak the last two weeks of October. Until then, the tourism department recommends driving county roads to see sourwoods, dogwoods and sweet gums, some of the first tree species to change color. The South Carolina Parks website offers viewers a web camera at southcarolinaparks.com to monitor color before they get on the road.



© 2011 Scripps Newspaper Group — Online