

RED LOCKS TO TAKE OFF (E-Y-1)



The mountains will soon be ablaze with fall color. FILE

FIVE GREAT PLACES TO SEE FALL COLOR

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The colors of fall are headed this way, and as always, the highest elevations will see the brilliant colors first.

Once the leaves reach their peak in the upper reaches of the

region, the color flows downward at a rate of about 1,000 feet per week, according to Clemson University forest ecologist Donald Hagan.

Here are five spots that should be prime leaf-watching areas for the season, ranked by elevation:

» Mount Mitchell, elevation 6,683 feet. The highest peak east of the Mississippi River is one of the first places in the area to see the fall colors. The state park's observation deck has the best views of the evergreens of the surrounding spruce firs, as well as the changing hues of the

nearby deciduous trees.

Address: 2388 State Highway 128, Burnsville, NC 28714

For more: www.ncparks.gov/mount-mitchell-state-park

» Grandfather Mountain, elevation 5,945 feet. The Mile-

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High Swinging Bridge showcases a 360-degree panorama of the surrounding mountains, and it's a great spot to catch the brilliant reds of the mountain ash berries.

Address: 2050 Blowing Rock Highway, Linville, NC 28646

For more: www.grandfather.com

» Max Patch, elevation 4,629 feet. A portion of the Appalachian Trail traverses this breathtaking bald in Pisgah National Forest, and the view encompasses both North Carolina and Tennessee.

Address: Max Patch Road, Hot Springs, NC 28743

For more: www.visitnc.com/listing/

max-patch-mountain

» Looking Glass Rock, elevation 3,970 feet. It's a 6.4-mile round-trip hike to see the views from the top, but the panorama of rolling, colorful mountains in the surrounding Pisgah National Forest is worth the trip.

Address: Located on FR 475 from US 276 in Pisgah National Forest

For more: ashevilletrails.com/pisgah-national-forest/looking-glass-rock-trail

» Caesars Head, elevation 3,208 feet. One of the most beautiful places to see the leaves in Greenville County, Caesars Head has the added bonus of being the site for the annual hawk migration during the autumn months.

Address: 8155 Geer Highway, Cleveland, SC 29635

For more: www.southcarolinaparks.com/caesarshead



Mount Mitchell is a good spot to see the fall colors. FILE