

The smells, colours, sound, and atmosphere of autumn

[Environment](#), [Nature](#)



Autumn is the slow decline of the year toward the winter, a slow lingering death from the height of summer into the cold and dark. I love the unexpected warm days. I love the colors of the season and the wind and rain feels quite energetic and powerful. It has always felt like a season of portents and omens, birds are flocking, deer are rutting, autumnal color is everywhere.

Autumn is nothing if not for the atmosphere. Countless horror movies are set at this time of year, no better demonstrated than in the cold and imposing forests. It is the perfect time of year because death is a constant reminder. It is getting colder and darker; leaves are falling from the trees. There is a chill in the air overnight, frost on the ground in the morning, mist and fog in the air. Dry, dead leaves crunch beneath your feet and clouds appear when you breathe out. It is also the season of Halloween and in the Commonwealth, Bonfire Night. Those five days between the end of October and the beginning of November is, for me, the beginning of the build up to the Christmas season. People actually begin to enjoy the colder weather and the darker evenings as it reminds of what is to come.

Autumn smells of frost. Autumn smells of woodfire, bonfires and the gunpowder of firework displays. Despite the slow descent towards a seeming death, there is still much life in the old year yet. Before they all drop off of the trees, leaves turn dazzling colors of ambers, reds and yellows creating images like this. The English countryside is famous for this sort of scene throughout the autumn. It is also the season of fruit picking: apples, pears

and to any child... blackberries! These are not just colorful but a reminder of the pinnacle of the livelihood of the season at the end of the year.

Autumn is noticeable for the absence of birdsong mostly and with leaves dropping off, you won't hear wind rustling through the trees for very long. For those of us living in the countryside it is a season of shrieking foxes, of the calling of deer for the rutting season. Small mammals such as badgers and squirrels scramble through the undergrowth during the darker evenings and overnight. Aside from autumn fruits, it is associated with heavier or more filling foods.

Most mornings, everything outside is damp with dew. Goosebumps raise on bare arms. Feet crunch on and swish through piles of dead leaves. On the really cold days, feet crunch on frozen earth. Also, on those warm days think about how the sun feels on your skin. It is a very different feeling to that in spring or summer.