



What to look for in October

In **October** the most obvious sign of autumn is the **falling of leaves** from deciduous trees. Trees lose their leaves to save energy. The shedding of tree leaves is caused by a release of hormones within the plant that cut off the leaves from the tree. Before the leaves fall, the fewer hours of sunlight means they are producing less chlorophyll, which usually gives them their characteristic green colour. Because of this, other pigments present in the leaves begin to show producing the many shades of reds, yellows and greens visible in hedgerows and woodlands.



Top: Autumn Colour, Below: Hazelnuts



Hazelnuts are ripening on wild hazel trees, providing food for many small mammals. Cultivated varieties of hazelnut are known as **Cob Nuts**, and are usually seen growing in orchards alongside fruit trees. Cob nuts have a longer husk than their wild cousins and the nut itself is more oblong in shape.



Shaggy Ink-Cap Fungus

At this time of year there are many different **Fungi** to look out for. The **Shaggy Ink-Cap Fungus** is identified by its distinctive bell shape. The fungi gets its name because as it decays, the cap gradually dissolves into black ink which was once used as a cheap substitute for Indian ink. Look out for flocks of **Greenfinch** nesting in colonies in dense shrub. Greenfinches eat a diet of seeds, nuts and berries. Traditionally a common farmland bird, they can now be seen in urban parks and gardens, taking advantage of bird feeders.



Greenfinch

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