



Using your yard or nature guides, color the leaves above the color they turn in the fall.

CELEBRATING THE ANNUAL FALL BALL

With the season of autumn comes a brief span of days where the landscape resembles various stages and colors of a rich, warm-hued rainbow. The November rains have not yet set in; the fall colors still stuck to the trees and shrubs. These are the days when we go outside to marvel over the shapes and markings of fallen leaves.

Some trees, like the magnolia, maintain their crisp, glossy green leaves, preferring to sit out the changes in which our flowering dogwood gladly participates. Sugar maple leaves turn red and yellow. A shining sumac twirls in her crimson pinnate gown. We compliment crisp, tailored curves of the pin oak's dark red tunic. We are dazzled by the stunning golden ombre of the bear oak's gown, its careful edging with bright green lines.

The larger leaves twirl down from the trees like ballerinas *en pointe*. Smaller leaves, often shaped like boats; their fall looks more like a fluttering of confetti, a rain of little brown leaves.

ACTIVITY: CREATE A CHRONICLE OF COLORS

Out came the nature journals. We decide to make a list of what each tree was wearing this year. Paying close attention to detail, we determine if the color tones are warm or cool. We look for ornamental additions, including brown splotches and different shadings on leaves, variations in colors on single trees, texture and dryness of leaves, edgings and colored leaf veins. Our testament to each tree's participation in this year's Fall Ball.

The poem below is my lame variation on the classic poem, "October Party", by George Cooper. Here in Alabama, the Annual Fall Ball usually takes place in November. We adjusted accordingly.

THE SONG OF THE FALL BALL

It comes but once a year,
this splendid annual affair,
when all the forest's trees
dance for days without a care.
The artists paint in a hurry
because the sun now sets at five.
Alas, the party ends abruptly
when November rains arrive.

We watched the annual Fall Ball,
The leaves by hundreds came—
The Chestnuts, Oaks, and Maples,
And leaves of every name.
Sir Sunshine spread a carpet,
And everything was grand,
Miss Weather led the dancing,
Professor Wind the band.

The Chestnuts came in yellow,
The Oaks in crimson dressed;
The lovely Misses Maple
In scarlet looked their best;
All balanced to their partners,
And gaily fluttered by;
The sight was like a rainbow
freshly fallen from the sky.

Then, in the rustic hollow,
At hide-and-seek they played,
The party closed at sundown,
And everybody stayed.
Professor Wind played louder;
They flew along the ground;
And then the party ended
The season's lost and found.

THE ANNUAL FALL BALL TOOK PLACE ON THE DAYS BETWEEN _____ AND _____ IN THE WE KNOW AS
. OUR FAVORITE APPEARANCES WERE MADE BY THE FOLLOWING TREES: