

Fall beyond be-leaf

NY set for slow but stunning season

By SARA DORN

Peepers, keep your eyes peeled: Leaf-viewing season is finally underway, with fall hues arriving in the Catskills and Adirondacks.

Fall colors across the state are expected to be delayed by one or two weeks as a result of a slightly warmer season, according to Weather Channel meteorologist Jonathan Belles.

“The higher elevation points are usually a little cooler, so they peak quicker,” Belles said.

“The Catskills and Adirondacks are typically first, followed by the Finger Lakes and Hudson Valley region.”

New York City leaves are scheduled to be at their brightest in early November, according to the Weather Channel.

Most counties are now seeing color changes in about 10 to 15 percent of leaves, the state’s tourism agency, I LOVE NY, reported on Thursday.

By the end of the weekend, trees in the Catskills in Sullivan County are expected to show a 15 to 20 percent change — more than any other area — “with some touches of yellow and orange beginning to emerge,” the tourism agency reported.

New York’s wet summer weather bodes well for a spectacular fall, Belles said — unlike last year, when a drought caused most leaves to fall before bold hues developed.

“I think it will be a good year for color,” he said. “There was no big drought that would turn everything brown immediately and

cause the leaves to fall off.

“How bright the colors are depends a lot on how dry the ground is. New York is pretty well-set this year in terms of rainfall.”

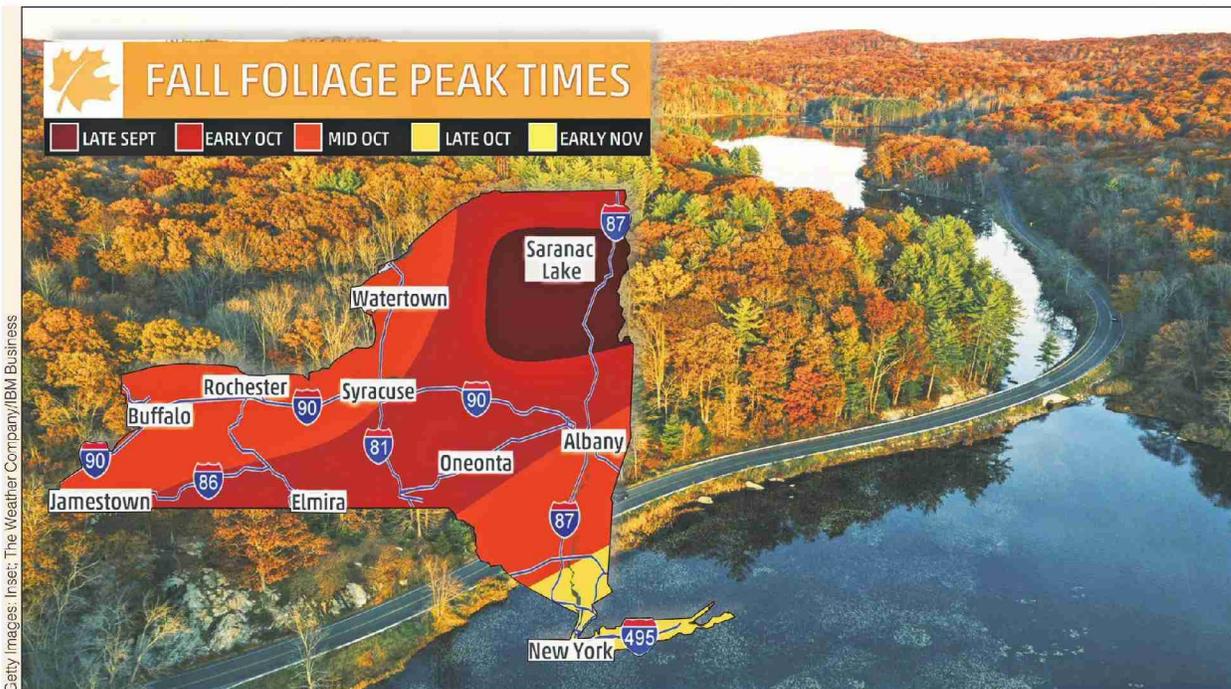
Vibrant shades thrive when sunlight is limited, causing leaves to lose the sunlight-induced chlorophyll that turns them green, Belles explained.

That’s why leaves begin to turn when the Earth’s Northern Hemisphere faces away from the sun as winter sets in.

Across the country, warmer-than-average September temperatures are expected to delay peak fall foliage.

September temps in NYC are expected to be at least 50 percent above average.

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