

Tree Hugs

Who was it that said, "stop and smell the roses?" I beg to differ and propose that everyone should stop and look at the trees, better yet, get up close and personal and touch one. Have you ever hugged a tree?

New England's bountiful fall foliage season is most glorious. As children, I am confident that many of you remember how we patiently waited for dad to finish raking the yard, or gather a large pile, so we could run at top speed and leap high into the pile of crisp and colorful leaves. The landing was filled with a crisp crunching noise and an earthy smell. We took so much delight in this activity I wonder how dad felt. Each season generations of kids jump in leaves and leaf-peepers come from all over the country during the New England fall season to take in the glory and magnificence of nature's kaleidoscopic palette. Every bend of the road offers something special so get your cameras ready. Wait! Why wait until the foliage season? Take a look today.

Many of us don't give leaves a second thought. Those of us in New England have become used to them, the same way people who grow up by the beach are used to ocean waves and seashells. My hope is that people have not become complacent, there is a magnificent experience awaiting those who will open their eyes and souls.

The colors of the season are bright and eye catching. Leaves take on brilliant variations of reds, oranges, green, gold, tan, and more. Have you ever stopped and looked at the trees? Many times while commuting to work I will glance at the trees and be rewarded by some magnificent views. I look at the trees. I really look at trees. I look at the shapes and the colors. For me, these natural visions are a unique experience each time just like snowflakes. I see the texture of the bark. Occasionally, I see bare branches jut out from the main trunk sharply into a backdrop of blue. A forest of tall, straight and thin pines across a street reaching up from the ground resemble the bristles of my daughter's hairbrush. A little further down the road, trees prove that straight to the sky is not always nature's way, as a branch diverts horizontally to the ground for about three feet and then returns to nature's "sky path".

The "Dalmatian" or New Hampshire's tree, the birch is another spectacular site. Standing alone, a birch tree shines with glowing white bark and small black marks against the dense green of the forest. The branches and leaves of this tree are minimal. The whiteness is brightness even on a cloudy day.

Green. How many shades/colors of green are there? Looking out my family room I can quickly recognize silver-green, red-green, light green, dark-green, gray-green and many more. Opening your eyes to the rainbows of green becomes another visual experience when looking at trees.

Shapes. On occasion I have looked and imagined trees to be blades of grass when my imagination takes on a giant's perspective. From very high, a giant would walk through the trees like people walk through tall grass occasionally encountering a blade, which catches their legs.

Trees are strong. Trees can relax. Trees can protect. Trees are quiet and sometimes they make beautiful music. Once while on a camping trip, bare straight pines collided against each other in heavy winds, "earth music" I said to my friends. We listened well into the evening.

Have you ever stopped and looked at the trees?