

10 SPOTS FOR...

AUTUMN COLOUR

You needn't cross the Atlantic to take in this natural spectacle – the UK puts on a great seasonal show too.

Westonbirt Arboretum is a riot of seasonal colour

CATCH A BIT OF HISTORY

1 ASHRIDGE FOREST, HERTFORDSHIRE

Take the autumn colour trail through Ashridge Forest to spot the best on show from beeches and sweet chestnuts. Walk quietly, and you might glimpse fallow deer. The trail passes through Golden Valley, which was designed by Capability Brown, who celebrates his 300th anniversary this year. More information: nationaltrust.org.uk/ashridge-estate



Words: Adrienne Wyper Photos: Alamy, iStockphoto.com, Shutterstock

TAKE A GENTLE STROLL

2 DAWYCK BOTANIC GARDEN, PEBBLES, SCOTTISH BORDERS

At the heart of this lovely botanic garden is the stone Dutch Bridge, which straddles the Scrape Burn stream, flanked by a large number of stunning trees including Kalopanax (castor oil tree), burnished bracken, and Japanese katsura, whose caramel aroma contrasts with the yellow birch, which smells like wintergreen. Stroll the landmark Beech Walk and admire the rowans' berry clusters and fiery foliage, as well as Japanese maples and spindles. Prices: Adult £6.50, children free. More information: rbge.org.uk/the-gardens/dawyck



3 MOUNT STEWART, CO DOWN

Hailed as one of the world's top gardens, Mount Stewart marries formal planting with the informality of the Lake Walk. New woodland trails show off its seasonal splendour, like birches, maples and enkianthus, all thriving in the climate and enklanthus, all thriving in the climate of Strangford Lough sea loch. Look out for the red squirrels.

Prices: Adult £7.72, children £3.86. More information: nationaltrust.org.uk/mount-stewart



ENJOY ULSTER'S BEAUTY

4 WESTONBIRT ARBORETUM, TETBURY, GLOUCESTERSHIRE

There are 15,000 trees from around the world, and in autumn colours segue from green into a succession of golds and russets. Don't miss the step-free Treetop Walkway, snaking through Silk Wood 43ft up, and watch out for dormice too! Prices: Adult £9, children £4. More information: forestry.gov.uk/westonbirt

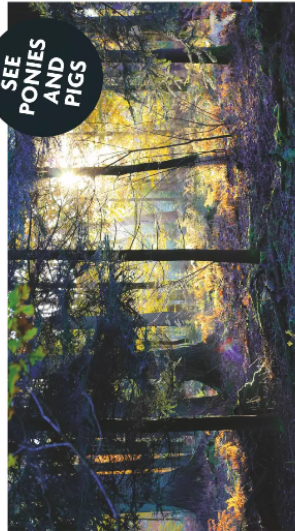


WALK ABOVE WOODS

5 THE NEW FOREST, BROCKENHURST, HAMPSHIRE

More than 900 years ago, William the Conqueror set aside the New Forest as a place to hunt boar and deer. Now its autumn display regularly rivals North America's – thanks to the mix of ancient ornamental and native trees, easy to see from a network of over 40 walking and cycling trails. Delight in the contrast of deep evergreens like yew and holly against the warm tones of redwoods, oaks and beech – with the famous New Forest ponies grazing alongside. Keep an eye out for pigs, let loose each autumn to forage for beech nuts and acorns, which are poisonous to ponies. More information: thenewforest.co.uk

SEE PONIES AND PIGS



Getaways

6 BELSAY HALL, NEAR MORPETH, NORTHUMBERLAND

This is one of Northumberland's top attractions, with 30 acres of picturesque landscaping. The ravines, rock pinnacles and cliffs of its Quarry Garden make a dramatic backdrop for Persian ironwoods, bronze beeches, purplish Cornus kousa (dogwood) and the yellow, copper and red sweet-smelling Japanese katsura. Prices: Adult £8.80, children £5.20. More information: english-heritage.org.uk

HIGH DRAMA SETTING

7 ABERGLASNEY, CARMARTHENSHIRE, WALES

Aberglasney, in Carmarthenshire's Tywi Valley, centres on the walled gardens that surrounds a manor founded in the Middle Ages. Its 10

acres blaze with autumn shades, starring Nysas (tupelo trees), Japanese maples, Persian ironwoods and shrubs. And there's the amazing yew tree tunnel, with trunks arching to the ground. Prices: Adult £7.73. More information: aberglasney.org



ANCIENT GLORY REVIVED

8 SHERWOOD FOREST, NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

This was originally a medieval hunting ground, and red and fallow deer still roam free here. Sherwood hosts colourful tales of Robin Hood, and the seasonal splendour of the sweet chestnuts, birches, beeches and oaks are legendary in their own right. Explore with walking and cycling trails to suit all stamina levels. Don't miss the Major Oak where Robin and his men sheltered and slept. More information: sherwoodforest.org.uk

FOLLOW ROBIN HOOD

9 SALCEY FOREST, NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

Just seven miles from Northampton you'll find 500 hectares of ancient woodland – some of its oaks are over 600 years old. Get closer to the colours of the oaks, ash and hazel 49ft up in the tree canopy on the Tree Top Way, with stunning views across the forest. More information: forestry.gov.uk/salceyforest



10 KEW GARDENS, LONDON

Take in the autumnal transformation of sweet chestnuts, limes and deciduous oaks from the Treetop Walkway at London's Kew Gardens 59ft up. Back on the ground, watch foraging squirrels while gazing at over 14,000 showstoppers like the red oaks and Atlantic cedars. Prices: Adult £15, children £3.50. More information: kew.org

OVER 14,000 TREES