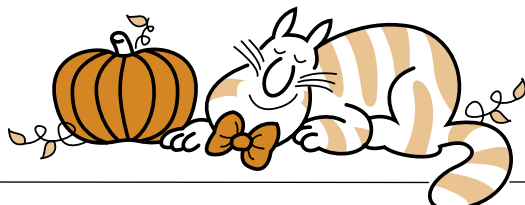


# CAT TALES™



## Why do leaves turn colour in fall?

**D**id you ever wonder why leaves change colour in the fall? Where do they suddenly get different coloured pigments after being green from spring to summer?

Leaves are part of a tree's mechanism for producing its food. Trees need food for energy and to grow, just like we do.

The tree takes water out of the ground with its roots and a gas, called carbon dioxide, out of the air through its leaves. In the leaves, the tree uses sunlight to turn the water and carbon dioxide into glucose, a kind of sugar that nourishes the tree. This process is called "photosynthesis", which just means "putting things together with light". Photosynthesis is possible because of a chemical in the leaves called chlorophyll.

Because chlorophyll is green, the leaves are green.

As autumn grows colder and the days grow shorter, there is not enough sunlight to allow photosynthesis to occur, so trees begin to shut down their food-making process to save energy over the winter. The trees live on the food they've stored during the spring and summer.

As the green chlorophyll disappears, its green pigment disappears as well, and the bright green leaves change to yellow and orange. Small amounts of these pigments have been in the leaves all along, but have been overwhelmed by the green chlorophyll. The red often seen in maple leaves is caused by glucose and the brown often seen in oak leaves is leftover waste trapped in the leaves when photosynthesis shuts down. In autumn, for a brief while, these other colours become visible. However, as the tree enters its dormant winter stage, it releases its hold on the leaves, and they fall off.

### FAT CAT® JOKES

Q. Where can birds play professional baseball?

A. In the mynah leagues!

Q. Why do birds shop only at sales?

A. They want things "cheep cheep"!

Q. Where do birds vacation?

A. In the Canary Islands!

Q. What kind of fish is at home in a bird cage?

A. A perch!

Q. What is a bird's favourite holiday?

A. Feather's Day!

Q. What birds would you find at home underground?

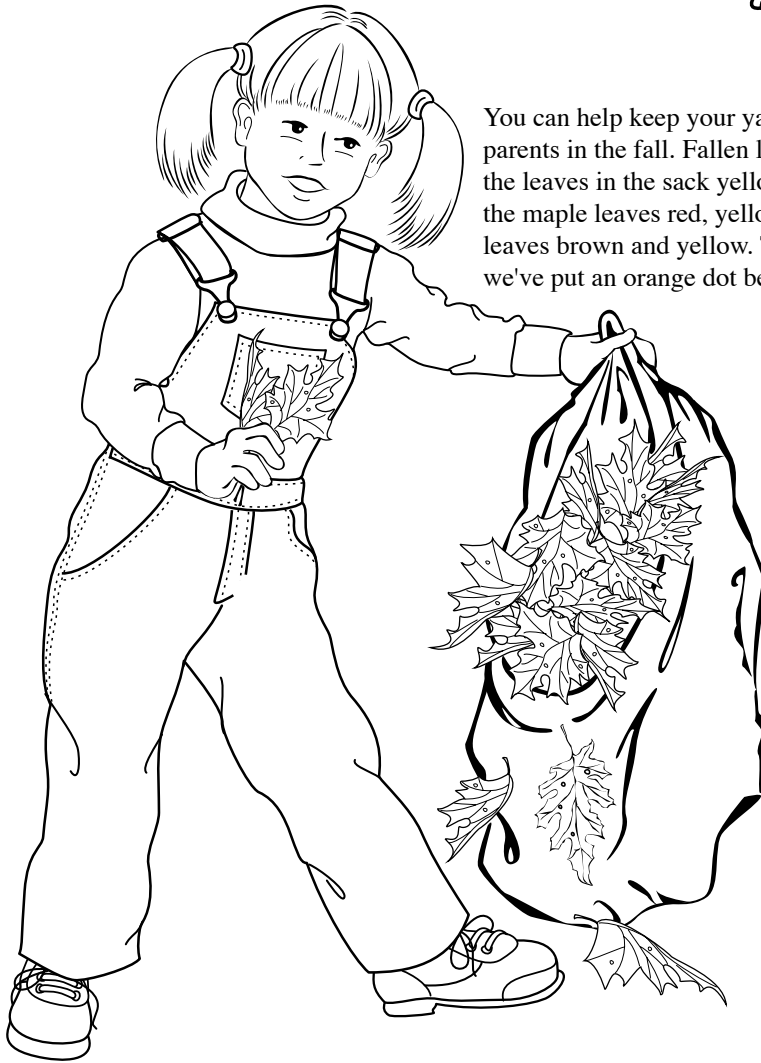
A. Mynah birds!



### Save some autumn colour

You can preserve colourful autumn leaves to use in crafts, like making a collage. All you need is a big, heavy book and some waxed paper. Collect the leaves shortly after they've fallen, to make sure they're not too dry and brittle. Place a leaf between two pieces of waxed paper, with the waxed side against the leaf. You can tell which is the waxed side by scraping it with your fingernail. Insert the leaf between two pages of the book. You can do several leaves in one book. Put the book into a bookcase where it is wedged tightly so there's pressure on the leaves. They will be ready to use in about two weeks.

# FAT CAT® Fun Page



You can help keep your yard neat by raking leaves with your parents in the fall. Fallen leaves make great compost! Colour the leaves in the sack yellow, red, orange and brown. Colour the maple leaves red, yellow and orange. Colour the oak leaves brown and yellow. To help you tell which are which, we've put an orange dot beside the oak leaves.



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