

CITY OF PORTSMOUTH



UPDATE from the City Manager for Sunday, October 11, 2020

Portsmouth Mask Ordinance now in effect. Do your part. Wear a mask.

Deaths to date from COVID-19: US: 214,591.

NH: 455. Rockingham County: 104.

Cumulative cases: US: 7,801,037.

Cumulative cases in NH: 9,092. Rockingham County: 2,210. Portsmouth: 124.

Current cases in NH: 692. Rockingham County: 121. In Portsmouth: 8.

For the complete, NH Department of Health & Human Services dashboard

<http://www.nh.gov/covid19>

Click here for the entire Advisory collection of poems by Portsmouth Poet Laureate Tammi Truax.

<https://www.cityofportsmouth.com/city-manager/portsmouth-poet-laureate>

In Japan this time of year is important. It invites reverence in accordance with ancient tradition, with Buddhist spirituality ("as the glow of the leaves reminds us that life is fleeting") and to beliefs of Shintoism ("as nature is inhabited by divine forces that manifest themselves to us"). They even eat tempura maple leaves!

Maple Leaf Hunting

We think of ourselves as experts on the subject of autumn leaf-peeping yet we don't even have a word for what the Japanese call *koyo zensen*.

We'd do well to perfect the practice of *Momiji-gari*, maple leaf hunting... to gather together for slow strolls, for picnics under trees, for contemplation,

even at night as mountainsides are illuminated. Burning bushes ignite, golden ginkgos glisten. Fields of green, orange, and caramel captivate, but it is the reds, the reds that dazzle.

Japanese maples, sumacs and elms blush into shades of crimson and purple. Finally, the *aki no nanakusa*, the seven flowers and grasses of autumn

join in until a quilt of colors quietly covers the country spreading slowly southward as everyone celebrates.

Momiji-gari is a spiritual experience. The hunt is the time to harvest hues, for viewing in reverence, for forest bathing, in communion with nature.

All gather her beauty in silent ceremony, bringing the warmth into the heart, to take home, knowing that soon a colorless cold is coming.

-- Tammi J Truax

Portsmouth Poet Laureate 2019-2021/Maine Beat Poet Laureate 2018-2020