



For a couple of weeks now, even though we've had the usual scalding days that are inevitable in August, there have been delightful periods with lovely clear skies and moderate temperatures. Your neighbors and people at the grocery store smile broadly on those perfect days, and usually someone mentions the arrival of fall.

September's here, but it's still a couple of weeks before fall actually arrives. Everyone seems ready for it, and there's a sense of anticipation fueled with each cool evening, with the lowering angle of sunlight, with the earlier arrival of evening. I've noticed conversations turning toward oyster roasts and hayrides, and I have even detected the distinctive perfume of mothballs on the clothes of early-adopter friends.

No, fall is not here yet, but it's not just our friends and neighbors who are preparing for its arrival. The signs are beginning to be obvious everywhere, and that, for me, is one of the most enjoyable parts of this transition. I always find the changes going on in the garden to be harbingers; but it is the roadsides along my drives through the Lowcountry, the woodland edges on my walks over the farm, that provide the most extensive evidence that Nature herself is in heavy preparation for fall and winter.

There are some reliable signs to watch for, markers of summer's coming end and fall's rushing



