

# Dynamic lakes always changing

MICHIGAN IS indeed a water wonderland, not only because of the surrounding Great Lakes, but because of many inland lakes that dot the landscape.

Ten thousand years ago, Michigan was covered by a mile-thick layer of ice known as a glacier. Although there were three prior glaciers, the last one was most influential in shaping our landscape today.

As the glacier grew and moved south, it brought rocks and debris from farther north. When the ice melted and the glacier receded, this collected debris was deposited and sculpted into the hills, valleys, plains and lakes of Michigan.

DETROIT PROPER has few hills or lakes because it was at one time



nature  
**Timothy Nowicki**

the bottom of a large lake. This ancient glacial lake extended westward and northward into southeastern Oakland County, northwestern Wayne County and surrounding areas.

The rolling land north and west of this lake bottom lake evolved naturally. Many lakes were formed in the valleys — far more than we see today. A lake is not stagnant; it is a dynamic area.

Plants and animals adapt to live in special areas where they can find food and shelter on land. The same principle is true in a lake.

Certain plants, like the cattail, grow only around the edge of a lake where the water is shallow. Other plants, like the water lily, can take root in deeper water and extend their leaves and flowers to the surface.

LIGHT is a critical factor in the distribution of aquatic plants. Deep areas have no plant growth and thus do not harbor certain kinds of animals. Most aquatic animals will be found where plants are because that is where they can find food.

Through the years, plants and animals in lakes die and fall to the bottom.

Leaves from surrounding trees fall into the lake and eventually to the bottom. Over a long period of time, the bottom of the lake begins to rise. More plants can grow because they are closer to the light.

More plants growing means that more are dying and building up the bottom. In time, the entire lake is filled in.

It will be a wet meadow area for a while. But when enough soil has been produced, shrubs, trees and eventually a forest will grow where once was a lake.

The writer is a naturalist at Independence Oaks in the Oakland County parks system.

# This fall's colors dimmer than usual

(AP) — The drought in Michigan may be over, but its effects will stretch into fall. Lack of rain during summer should produce dimmer-than-usual autumn colors, a Michigan State University professor says.

September and early October weather affects foliage colors. But if a tree is stressed by the drought or caterpillars, the color may be less vibrant than otherwise, said Melvin Koelling, a Michigan State forestry professor.

Autumn colors in the northwestern Lower Peninsula probably will be affected most by the lack of rain, Koelling said.

THE DROUGHT also may take a toll on sugar maples, which usually produce rich red hues.

Koelling said urban maples, especially those growing between streets and sidewalks, may have been short of moisture this summer.

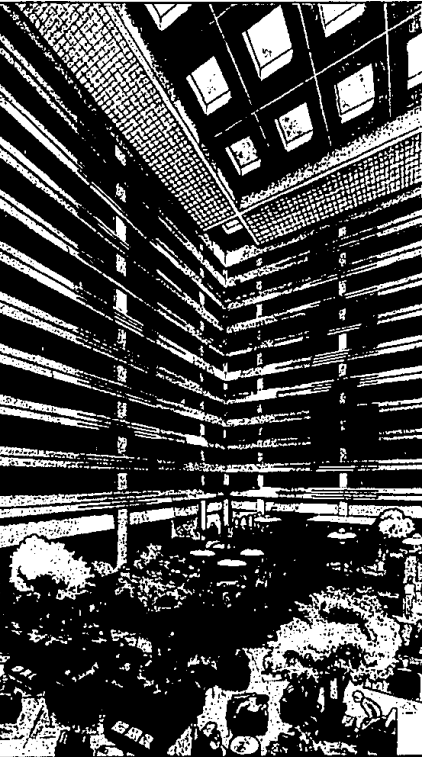
"Some of the leaves already show signs of stress with brown at the tip of the leaf," he said.

In addition, Koelling said he fears that the forest tent caterpillar, which ravaged thousands of acres of woodland in the northern Lower Peninsula, may have caused lasting damage.

FALL COLORS won't be absent. Michigan has 19 million acres of forest and boasts 65 species of deciduous trees that produce color, more than any other state and more than all of Europe.

There will be plenty of yellow and orange hues. Koelling said the pigments always are present in the leaf but are hidden by chlorophyll, a substance that keeps them green when combined with sunlight.

The brilliant reds result from high concentrations of sugar. Koelling said that as the tree begins to prepare itself for winter, tubes carrying sugar from the leaves to the twigs become blocked and the sugar accumulates in the leaf, causing the rich red tint.



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