OBJECTIVE: To determine the timing and progression of fall coloration and leaf drop at a specific location.

METHODS:

Select at least 5 trees and 5 saplings of each species at each site to monitor. Tag them so that the same trees can be revisited. Since crown ratings are taken, it is ideal to have two people rating each tree. If only one person is going to take measurements, it is helpful to mark the viewing spot so the same location can be used each time.

Crown color data collection is made by estimating the percent of each tree with color other than green, using 5% classes (0, 1-5 = 5, 6-10 = 10, etc). Leaf drop is best monitored using the crown density measurement as in the National Forest Health Monitoring Program. A visual estimate (in 5% classes) of the density of the crown includes both foliage, seeds and branches. Therefore, a measure of the density of the tree with no foliage will be needed as a minimum value specific to each tree. This can be taken late in the fall once all the leaves are gone, or in the spring before leaf out.

For each tree, a percent color and a crown density rating are recorded at each visit. An initial crown rating of each tree is made in late July or early August. This gives a baseline for the crown density with all the foliage present and gives a measure of any color existing due to scorch, anthracnose, maple leaf cutter, etc. Visits to record color and leaf drop are made every 2 weeks beginning the last week of August. There is a short time, which is site specific, when more frequent visits are advised. Once trees begin to reach 50% color, both coloration and leaf drop can happen quickly. To capture these more accurately, visit the site once a week for a 2-3 week period (in the mountains of northwestern Vermont this is the last week of September and the first 2 weeks of October).

Vermont Monitoring Cooperative
Fall Color and Leaf Drop Monitoring

SITE _____

OBSERVERS: _____

SPECIES: _____

Date/ Tree # or Regen #	Color	DEN	Color	DEN	Color	DEN	Color	DEN	Color	DEN	Color	DEN
1												
2												
3												
4												
5												
R1												
R2												
R3												
R4												
R5												