

Leaves and the Leaf Fairy

One sunny fall day while I was using a tractor mounted leaf blower to blow fallen leaves from off the trails in the park where I was working, I happened upon a grandmother and a small girl about age four. The grandmother had obviously taken her granddaughter out for an outing in the park. The little girl had tightly gripped in her clenched fist one particularly colorful maple leaf. Since they were walking towards me, and in addition were walking uphill, out of courtesy and safety I opted to shut off the entire leaf blowing machine to allow the duo a safe path to negotiate around the machinery. I then removed my hard hat and ear protection and cordially greeted the little girl who was several yards ahead of her grandmother and obviously had much more energy than did her much older grandparent. The little girl proudly displayed her colorful prize and explained to me that because of its beauty, she would display the leaf for show and tell in her kindergarten class.

Until that moment, I had been lamenting the thousands of leaves which had inundated the park and its associated trails. I had been thinking only of the problems that these leaves can cause if left unremoved. They would literally cause the paved asphalt trails to deteriorate through the acid generated by their breakdown. This would cause the erosion of the trails, walkways and structures like picnic tables if they were allowed to clog the drains and ditches which were intended to remove the rain water. These leaves also were so numerous, that they had clogged the intake ports of the blowing machine, and this necessitated stopping the machine and unclogging the air intake ports so air could be generated to finish blowing the leaves off the trails.

I could imagine that through the innocence of her youth, this little girl believed that those leaves were individually colored by a type of "leaf fairy" whose job it was to paint with brush and palette each individual leaf, not only those within the park, but all those within her eyesight. I chuckled at the silliness of such an idea until the thought hit me like a beam of light through a prism that she was not far from the actual truth as I understood it to be. You see, when God created the trees, He did so with a brilliant idea. The leaves of the trees are green, to be sure. This is because of the green chlorophyll in them which enables the trees to produce sugars and oxygen through the complexity of photosynthesis. The green chlorophyll, however, masks or hides other underlying plant pigments of yellows and reds. These reds and yellows are not seen until the fall causes the green in the main coloration to fade and allow the hidden and less prominent colors to be displayed and the spectacle known as autumn unveils its grandeur.

The yellows and reds, being randomly dispersed throughout each single leaf, do create a unique pattern which is distinctive for each leaf. In effect the coloration pattern of each leaf is as individual as are fingerprints. Thus the leaves have been uniquely colored one by one as was likely believed by the little girl. This coloring has been done, not by the "leaf fairy", but by the artistic hand of our Divine Creator. As the little girl and her weary grandmother left my sight, I found myself with a new perspective of God's orderliness and concern for the beauty of His creation. Through her naiveté this little girl had allowed me to the beauty in the leaves and had removed my blinders to the marvels of our God.