



**Nature's Notebook at the New York Botanical Garden  
March 25, 2014  
Webinar Q&As**

**Q. How should we evaluate fruits on black cherries when the birds get them before they ripen?**

Report that you see fruit (but not ripe fruit) when they are still on the plant, and mark no to fruit once they are gone. You may never get a chance to report ripe fruit, but feel free to mention in the comments that the fruits were likely taken by birds.

**Q: Any helpful hints to help distinguish between breaking leaf buds and breaking flower buds?**

It really depends on the species, and you may have to get to know each species over one season before you can definitively tell. Leaves and flowers may develop in separate buds or in the same bud, and leaves may emerge first or flowers may emerge first. Regardless of whether leaves emerge from a dedicated leaf bud or a shared leaf and flower bud, you should always wait to see a green leaf tip before reporting breaking leaf buds.

**Q: How should we evaluate fruits on tulip poplars, which retain their fruit through the next season?**

If there are still viable seeds on the tree, then continue to report yes to ripe fruits regardless of how long they remain on the tree.

**Q: Many times the trees are very tall and you are lucky if you see just a few nuts--how do you handle this?**

It is hard to evaluate phenophases in tall trees. You can use binoculars, or just mark ? if you are uncertain.

**Q: What type of binoculars do you recommend for viewing phenophases in tree canopies?**

Two good models are: Pentax 8x42mm DCF CS and Nikon Monarch 10x42mm. However, what is best for you really depends on the characteristics of your own eyes. If at all possible, try using the binoculars to look up into a tall tree before buying them.

**Q: If fruit drops but is not visible on the ground because it has been cleaned up**

**(usually happens quickly around NYBG), how should that be recorded?**

You can use any evidence that a ripe or nearly ripe fruit is no longer on the tree to report recent fruit drop. This could just be your memory that particular ripe fruits were on the tree last time you checked but gone now. They might have been taken away by an animal or swept off the ground by humans.

**Q: How would you evaluate pollen release?**

Unless it is really obvious, like a pine tree releasing a lot of visible pollen in the wind, it may not be possible to see pollen release in tall trees where the flowers are out of reach. In that case, just skip this phenophase.

**Q: Many of our trees, such as birches and oaks, have both male and female flowers. Which flowers are we recording phenophase status for?**

So far we have not developed separate phenophases for male and female flowers, so you should record flowering status for any flowers you see regardless of whether they are male or female. You could always include a comment about which type you see if you know how to tell them apart.

**Q: Beech trees retain their leaves long after they've turned brown. When do we consider them dropped?**

Once the leaves on a beech (or oak) tree have dried and turned brown (no pigment/chlorophyll left), don't count them as leaves, or colored leaves. Just ignore them.

**Q: Should we report on phenophases that NYBG is not formally observing? Do we leave the "Y N ?" blank?**

If you are not observing a particular phenophase, don't worry – just leave it blank!

**Q: Do all of the NYBG datasheets now align with the USA-NPN protocols?**

Yes, they generally do, especially now that we've clarified the phenophase definitions. For the Living Collections, they are excluding one leafing phenophase, and adding one flowering phenophase, but are otherwise aligned.

**Q: If you lose leaves out of the tree canopy, is it possible to have 100% colored leaves?**

No, once leaves start falling from the tree in significant numbers, the percent of total potential leaves (green or otherwise) drops below 100%. See this FAQ for a further explanation of how to evaluate colored leaves: [www.usanpn.org/nn/faq#canopy\\_colored](http://www.usanpn.org/nn/faq#canopy_colored)

**Q: If new leaves emerge after others have reached full size, do we mark "Y" for "breaking leaf buds" again?**

Probably not. Most deciduous trees put out new leaves at the tips of elongating twigs or branches well into late summer. These should not be recorded as anything in particular. An

exception is the rare occurrence of a late frost, summer drought or pest damage where many or all of the leaves are killed. In those cases the tree may respond by producing some new “emergency” leaf buds that then will break. If that happens, then you should be reporting a second round of breaking leaf buds.

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