

Gourd tidings!

How are you doing, AQUILAnauts?
Welcome to our awesome
Autumn Adventure issue.

Why not kick off your boots, snuggle down under a blanket with a nice warm cup of something cinnamony, and let's get crackling.

When does autumn actually start?

That's a good question, with a surprising number of different answers.

Astronomical autumn is defined by the Earth's orbit around the Sun. It begins on the *equinox*, which usually falls on 22 or 23 of September.

Meteorologists, on the other hand, need to use the same date every year, so they say autumn begins on 1 September.

For the Ancient Greeks, autumn began when the goddess Persephone was taken by Hades to be the Queen of the Underworld (I know, dark, right?). Her poor mum, Demeter, was so upset she caused all the crops to die until the spring, when Persephone returned and the Earth came back to life.

In my house autumn starts when we finally give in and turn on the central heating.

When does your autumn start? Why not write to us at the usual address and let us know?

What with things opening up after lockdowns and the beginning of a new school year, it's easy to forget to notice the natural changes happening around us. This is your official reminder to go outside and take a walk, throw some fallen leaves in the air, do a bit of stargazing. If you're really lucky you might even get to toast a marshmallow or five. If you are having bonfires, please take a minute to check for wildlife. Remember: that pile of sticks looks like kindling to you and me, but to a hedgehog it looks like a million-dollar mansion!

Freya Hardy, ed

We hope you have an optimal October. We'll see you back here in November for our marvellous Moon edition. Until then, stay safe and well, wherever you are.

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Catching Zzzzzzz

Welcome celebrity survival expert, Spike Flea, here to tell us all about the wonders of hibernation. Just don't doze off, okay? He's making a point. Geddit? Because he's a HEDGEHOG!?

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Mellow yellow

I don't want to scare anyone, but not everything in your kitchen is exactly what you think it is. No, I don't mean that lasagna from last Wednesday (although that is GROSS), I'm talking about shape-shifting turmeric. Here's Harvey to tell us more.

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A right royal engagement

E.B.'s on tour following the mighty monarch butterfly on a turbulent trip from its summer breeding grounds in the US and Canada, to the sacred fir forests of Mexico. Now that's what I call an autumn adventure!

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A question of confection detection

In Chittering-on-the-Weald, a cohort of scurrilous seagulls are attacking trick-or-treaters and making off with the spoils. Can you make sure everyone gets their sweets back, in this month's Brainfeeders?

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Jolly green giants

Did you grow any greens this summer? Tell me, were they MASSIVE? Did your runner beans run out of growing room? Did your spinach spin out of control? Get your vertiginous veggies here.

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Our friends at Foodini Food Club are back with a hearty Halloween treat: A recipe for yummy Jack-O'-Pie! Plus there's an autumnal giveaway for you to enter.

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Up and ATOM

World-renowned nano-scientist Jess Wade is here to tell us all about the nanotechnology in trees. It turns out small isn't just beautiful, it's also super USEFUL.

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Count me in

One, two, buckle my shoe. Three, four, look on the floor. Five, six, pick up sticks. NOW MEASURE THOSE STICKS, AND STOP RHYMING, WILL YOU? It's annoying me now. Phew! Good job Calculata's here to take us all on a beautiful and relaxing forest maths trail.

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Easily ghoul-ed?

Ghost hunters regularly go looking for things that go bump in the night. Some even claim to have scientific instruments that can detect such things, but is it all just a load of hocus-pocus? I'll give you a clue: Yes. Yes, it is.

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Make it rain!

This autumn Polly's painting with precipitation, and so can you!

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Diner disaster!

Aunty Aquila and her gang of tweenage teammates are busy at the Greasy Spoon at the End of Time. A staff shortage means they're pitching in behind the counter, but things are going spectacularly BADLY. Can you help them match the customer to their order, before intergalactic war breaks out?

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AQUILAnews

and Ian!

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Do-you-think-she-saurus?

At the end of part 1, science enthusiast Luca was just about to steal an unhatched *Stegosaurus* egg from the Natural History Museum. Who has disturbed him in his moment of weakness? Could he hatch a *Stegosaurus*, or is he just going to prison now? Find out in part 2 of Danielle Jawando's brand new short story: **Operation Stegosaurus.**