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by Larry French

A chipmunk peeks out from his cozy nest. It is morning and time to get up. He looks about and sniffs the cool air, sensing a change in the wind.

The chipmunk knows there is much work to be done. There are seeds to be gathered and stored. A new season has begun.

Have you ever had questions about the seasons? Here are some you may have asked—especially about the season we are entering now.



PHOTOS: BILL IVY

Why are there seasons?

Summer, spring, winter and fall happen because of the way the earth orbits the sun. The earth is tilted to one side (see diagram). This tilt makes different parts of the earth lean away from the sun as the year passes. Parts that tilt *toward* the sun have spring or summer, while those leaning *away* have fall or winter.

When you are watching autumn leaves change, girls and boys in South America are enjoying the flowers of spring.

Where did we get the names “autumn” and “fall”?

The word “autumn” comes from the Latin word *auctumnus*, meaning the time of increase. It is the season when many crops are harvested.

Autumn is also the time when leaves change into a rainbow of colors. In some countries this season is called “fall”—the time of year when leaves *fall* from the trees.

