



JULY PHENOLOGY

A reflective look at 2013

by Jim Gilbert, Naturalist

Historically, July is our warmest and sunniest month. Gardens burst with blossoms, berries ripen and corn stretches tall. Listed below are a few observations from a year ago in the Twin Cities Metro area, Waconia and areas beyond when indicated. These events can be used to anticipate upcoming happenings and will help you compare this year with last.

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White water lilies bloom along lake shores where the bottom is mucky.



July 2 * After 12 sunsets in a row at 9:03pm, tonight's sunset was at 9:02pm in the Twin Cities. Carver County farmers begin cutting their second crop of alfalfa. Lesser Yellowlegs and Least Sandpipers gather, signaling the start of shorebirds' fall migration.

July 4 * Field corn is 2-5 feet high. From southern to northern Minnesota, fireflies flash their tiny lights.

July 5 * The next generation of Monarch butterflies stretches their wings for the first time.

July 6 * The first annual cicadas call, 21 days later than in 2012. Gardeners harvest zucchini, green beans, leaf lettuce and strawberries. The near surface water temperature of Leech Lake is 76°F. Walleyes are biting.

Tree Swallows begin lining up on utility wires; they only have one brood of young each year and are now done caring for nestlings. Red mulberry fruit is ripe and ripening; it's a treat for us humans plus many birds such as American Robins, Gray Catbirds and Cedar Waxwings.



July 10 * The near surface temperature of Lake Waconia is a warm 80°F.

July 11 * The first wild blackcap raspberries ripen. Garden raspberries are ready to pick. American Goldfinches are building nests.

July 13 * Prairies are scenic with blooming leadplant,

purple coneflower, butterfly weed and many more.

July 14 * The heat is sweltering! Birds have no sweat glands, so in warm weather they get rid of excess body heat by panting. Birds are less active today and many find sheltered places where they pant and rest.

July 17 * Garden perennials in full bloom now include monarda, hydrangea, daylilies, lillium, roses and clematis. Fireflies continue to be abundant.

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Canada Geese can fly for the first time since their spring molt. Purple Martin colonies resonate with singing and chatty calls to one another. Deer flies and mosquitoes annoy hikers.



July 22 * Among the dozens of blooming plants in prairies are monarda, purple prairie clover and Culver's root.

July 24 * The first locally grown sweet corn is available, 17 days later than in 2012. Soybeans begin setting pods. Fields of oats and wheat are golden-brown as they mature.

July 27 * Ruby-throated Hummingbirds aggressively vie for positions at sugar water feeders, where they feed until at least 9:10 p.m. Gray Catbirds, House Finches, Red-bellied Woodpeckers and Baltimore Orioles come to grape jelly feeders.

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Purple Martin young fledge.



July 31 * Double peonies continue flowering in the Lutsen/Tofte area, where fireweed, pearly everlasting and Canada goldenrod are among the many blooming wildflowers.

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