

May Phenology

a reflective look at 2009

by Jim Gilbert



1 The first Baltimore Orioles return. Tiny leaves out on bur oaks, sugar maples and basswoods. Today was the official ice-out for both Upper Red and Lower Red Lakes in Beltrami County. (Ice-out in 2010 was April 6 for Upper Red and April 8 for Lower Red, nearly a month earlier this year.)

3 First Green Herons seen. By now many people who feed birds are pleased that “the big three:” Baltimore Orioles, Rose-breasted Grosbeaks, and Ruby-throated Hummingbirds, are back and visiting their feeding stations.

7 Thickets of wild plum trees are covered with fragrant white flowers. Wild Columbine begins blooming. Ohio Buckeye trees have started to flower.

8 Ice-out date for Caribou Lake located near Lutsen and for Lake of the Woods.

9 Indigo Buntings have arrived and come to Nyjer feeders, White-throated Sparrows are feeding on the ground underneath the feeders. Chickadee nest has eight eggs.

10 Red-eyed Vireos and Warbling Vireos first return. We are enjoying the visual beauty and superb fragrances of Crabapple and Apple trees, plus Lilacs, in bloom. Also, in southern Minnesota, the native trees such as Basswoods, Sugar Maples and Red Oaks are now leafed out enough to provide quite a bit of shade in forest areas. Along the North Shore of Lake Superior the only tree species showing even a tinge of green is the Quaking Aspen, which has tiny leaves emerging.

11 Cedar Waxwings observed eating Crabapple flowers.

12 Ruby-throated Hummingbirds first return to Lutsen.

15 First migrating Monarch Butterfly seen.

16 The ice cover left Greenwood Lake in Cook County near the Canadian border. It’s a deep lake and late to go out each year (May 18 is its average ice-out date).

17 First 90 degree or above day in 2009 for the Twin Cities. A record high of 97 degrees F was recorded. First Eastern Cottonwood fluff in the air. European Mountain Ash trees blooming, and Ginkgo trees leafing out.

18 Record high of 94 degrees. Common Tree Frogs and American Toads very vocal.

24 Black flies out. Barn Swallows collect mud for nest building. Bridal Wreath shrubs are in bloom and look like white fountains.

25 First alfalfa hay cut in Waconia area.

29 Young Eastern Chipmunks out and exploring. It’s the prime time for Wood Duck eggs to hatch. Tall Bearded Irises bloom nicely.

30 New cattail leaves are up 2 to 6 feet so marshes are looking green again. In Carver County (Waconia area), field corn is up 6-8”, and soybean plants up 2-4.”

31 Eastern tiger swallowtail butterflies on the wing.



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