



SEPTEMBER PHENOLOGY

A reflective look at 2014

by Jim Gilbert, Naturalist

September is transition month, the time of summer's ending. Usually the first half of the month is summery but the last days are true autumn. 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 2015 with last year.

September 1 * Today is the first day of meteorological autumn; we have just finished the three warmest months of the year. Wild blueberry picking is still good in the Arrowhead.

September 2 * Giant puffballs and many other interesting species of mushrooms emerge. Waves of migrating warblers continue moving through.

September 4 * Monarch butterflies head south one by one. They stop to eat nectar from wild asters, goldenrods, and on garden flowers such as Mexican sunflower and *Autumn Joy* sedum. Monarchs begin arriving at their mountainside wintering sites in the state of Michoacan, Mexico about Nov. 1.

SEPT.
6

It's the last day Baltimore Orioles are plentiful at grape jelly and sugar water feeders; they are night migrators, off to winter in Central America.



September 7 * We see touches and patches of fall leaf colors on sumacs, sugar maples and more. Both common and great ragweeds, with their green flowers, continue to shed pollen into the air causing hay fever symptoms in many people.

September 10 * Wild rice, MN's official state grain, is being harvested.

SEPT.
12

Up to 20 species of migrating warblers migrate through our area. Ohio buckeye tree nuts start falling.



September 13 * First frost over much of MN. In Faribault, Ruby-throated Hummingbirds come to sugar water feeders in numbers, but no males since Sept. 6. Chimney Swifts gather and roost in numbers as

they stage for migration to South America; tonight over 1,000 of these fast-flying birds dropped into a chimney in LeSueur within 10 minutes after sunset.

September 14 * Sumacs display striking red and yellow foliage. Apple growers start picking Honeycrisp, the official MN state apple since 2006. Wood Ducks, Wild Turkeys, deer and many other animals feed on acorns.

September 17 * It's time to harvest Concord grapes. Common milkweed pods have just started opening. A late Baltimore Oriole visits a feeding station in Delano.

SEPT.
15

The first Dark-eyed Juncos and White-throated Sparrows arrive. They like millet and cracked corn scattered on the ground at our feeding stations.



September 21 * Most Ruby-throated Hummingbirds leave northern MN by Sept. 12th and the southern part of the state by Sept. 25th. Still, be sure to keep those sugar water feeders clean and filled, because only the hummers know when to leave—and that could be into October.

September 25 * Fall color is coming on fast in the Twin Cities area, and is peaking in parts of northern MN, including the ridge above the North Shore of Lake Superior.

September 28 * It's the peak of the fall color season across much of the northern third of MN.

September 30 * Most of the big, native sugar maples out in the open have large patches of red and burnt-orange foliage. Common Loons are assembling on larger lakes in northern and central MN before migrating to the Gulf Coast or Atlantic seaboard.