



AUGUST PHENOLOGY

A reflective look at 2014

by Jim Gilbert, Naturalist

August is a month of light winds and sunshine, breaking from July's often extreme heat. Meanwhile, early signs predict the fall migration. Listed below are a few observations from a year ago in the Twin Cities Metro area, Waconia and areas beyond. These events can be used to anticipate happenings and will help you compare this year with last.

August 1 * Garden perennials in bloom include: phlox, purple coneflower, Russian sage, daylilies, and hostas. Across the state, warm lake and stream waters enhance canoe trips, tubing and swimming.

August 2 * Newly emerged and faded monarch butterflies sip nectar from phlox, monarda and blazing star flowers.

August 6 * Great ragweed begins shedding pollen. Waves of purple loosestrife flowers bloom in wet ditches and wetlands. American Goldfinches, Song Sparrows and Gray Catbirds continue to sing.

August 17 * Beekeepers begin extracting honey. The first report comes in of Common Nighthawks migrating south. This evening, soon after sunset, 538 Chimney Swifts enter the chimney at Zion Church in LeSueur. They're staging for migration.



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In the MN River Valley between Henderson and St. Peter, observers watch tens of thousands of migrating common green darter dragonflies head southward.

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A final brood of Eastern Bluebirds hatches. A Northern Cardinal begins singing at 5:20 a.m.; it's barely light in the east. Ebony jewelwing damselflies flourish along creeks. Wild cucumber, an annual vine with clusters of small white flowers, reaches peak bloom.

August 9 * The first snowy tree crickets call in the night. Chipping Sparrows and House Wrens busily feed their young. Bats make good use of bat houses.

August 12 * Wild blueberry picking is good in north central and northeast MN. Farmers combine wheat fields in western MN.

August 21 * Both great and common ragweed shed much pollen. Ripe Paula Red apples are ready to pick.

August 23 * Warblers migrate along the North Shore of Lake Superior. Patches of Jerusalem artichoke and Canada goldenrod present masses of sunny yellow blossoms. Ripe wild grapes offer hikers a pleasant snack. Migrating monarch butterflies head south, one-by-one.

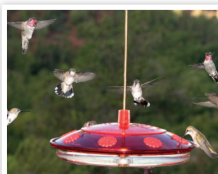
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Over 100 Great Egrets gather near New Germany. 3,000+ migrating Common Nighthawks fly over Duluth. White-lined sphinx moths, also called hummingbird moths, visit gardens.



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There's an influx of Ruby-throated Hummingbirds in the Twin Cities and Faribault area. Now is the time to put out several nectar feeders—migrants from the north, plus locals and their offspring vie for sugar-water ports.



August 16 * Lake Waconia's near surface water temperature is 76°F. Chokecherries are ripe across MN.

August 28 * Zestar apples reach ripeness. Sixteen species of migrating warblers move through Carver County. Hummingbirds dine on jewelweed, hosta and Cardinal flower nectar.

August 31 * Apple growers begin picking Sweetango and Chestnut crabapples. Meteorological summer ends; the three warmest months on average are behind us.