



AUGUST PHENOLOGY

A reflective look at 2015

by Jim Gilbert, Naturalist

Light winds and warm sunshine accompany August as fall migration approaches. It's a great time for outdoor fairs and farm stands. 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.

August 1 ✱ American Goldfinches, the late nesters, are now nesting. Monarch butterflies, their eggs and caterpillars are more abundant now than in the last few years. Both common and great ragweeds are shedding their first pollen. It's good to hear Gray Catbirds meowing, Warbling Vireos and House Wrens singing, and Eastern Wood Pewees calling. Baltimore Oriole young come often to jelly feeders.

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In the Lutsen/Tofte area migrating Blackpoll, Tennessee, and Nashville Warblers move southwest along the North Shore these past few days. In the same area, ripe wild red raspberries, strawberries, blueberries, gooseberries, and serviceberries all make great snacks for hikers.



August 6 ✱ Large numbers of Tree Swallows line up on utility wires as they stage for migration.

August 9 ✱ The first wild plums and wild grapes are ripe. Ruby-throated Hummingbirds have begun their feeding frenzy— now is the time to add several feeders in your yard. Their numbers have increased because of newly fledged young, with some added migrants from the north.

August 11 ✱ Purple Martins, the largest swallows, gather in big flocks staging for migration.

August 12 ✱ Prairie areas are very colorful with blooming grasses like big bluestem and Indian grass, and blooming wildflowers such as prairie-dock and blazing-star.

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The first Common Nighthawks migrate south. Rudbeckia, Russian sage, and various phlox in perennial gardens have bright attractive flowers.



August 15 ✱ Annual cicadas buzz until 27 minutes after sunset. Two late fireflies visit this evening.

August 20 ✱ First ripe Wealthy apples. Dahlias, hostas, zinnias, marigolds and snapdragons bloom vigorously.

August 23 ✱ Keep your feeding station going for pre-migration Baltimore Orioles and Ruby-throated Hummingbirds. Chipping Sparrows, House Finches and many more songbirds continue to come to seed feeders.

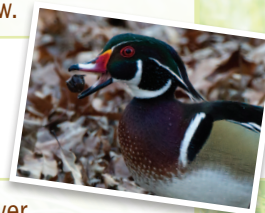
August 24 ✱ Beacon, State Fair, Paula Red, Wealthy, and Zestar are some of the apple varieties that are ready to pick.

August 25 ✱ Common and great ragweeds shed pollen. Showy clusters of blooming Canada goldenrod plants—which do not shed pollen into the air or cause hayfever symptoms—paint meadows and ditches yellow.

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Wood Ducks eat newly fallen bur oak acorns. The first soybean fields turn golden-yellow.



August 29 ✱ Beekeepers extract honey. Carver County farmers begin harvesting a fourth crop of alfalfa.

August 31 ✱ Today's high is 86°F. Annual cicadas buzz loudly. Rudbeckia and purple coneflowers bloom. Apple growers pick SweetTango and Chestnut crabs.