



JULY PHENOLOGY

A reflective look at 2014

by Jim Gilbert, Naturalist

Sunshine and heat are hallmarks of July. Backyard birds feast on bugs, blossoms and berries while new butterflies stretch their wings. 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 predict upcoming happenings and will help you compare this year with last.

JULY

1



Tree Swallow young begin fledging from nest boxes. Black-eyed Susan, common mullein and common milkweed are some of the wildflowers that are starting to bloom.

July 2 * After 12 sunsets in a row at 9:03pm, tonight's sunset is at 9:02pm in the Twin Cities. 22 bird species, including Baltimore Orioles, Indigo Buntings and Rose-breasted Grosbeaks, are daily visitors at one feeding station on the edge of Northfield.

July 4 * Both Red-bellied and Downy Woodpeckers bring their young to suet feeders. Field corn in southern MN is about knee high. Leech Lake's water temperature is 71°F and walleye are biting. From far southern to far northern MN, fireflies sparkle in the night.

July 5 * First ripe wild red raspberries.

July 6 * First 90°F reading of the year in the Twin Cities. First monarch butterflies of the new generation since arriving in MN now take flight.

JULY

9

Baltimore Orioles teach their young to eat grape jelly at feeding stations. Two dozen species of wildflowers bloom in Southern MN prairies. Lake Superior water temperature is still a chilly 38°F.



July 10 * The first full-size tomato (Early Girl) is ripe. Red mulberry trees produce the delicious fruit relished by American Robins, other birds and by outdoor enthusiasts.

July 12 * Honey bees forage on clover flowers. Purple Martins and Chimney Swifts hunt insects over Winona and the nearby Mississippi River Valley.

July 15 * The first crews detassel field corn in Carver County. Gardeners harvest cabbages, cucumbers and potatoes. Shorebird migration has begun; about 10 species visit the area.

July 20 * Garden daylilies are at overall peak bloom. Prairies offer the most conspicuous wildflowers at this time, including both purple and gray-headed coneflowers.

July 21 * Today is the warmest day of 2014 in the Twin Cities with a high of 92°F. Male annual cicadas buzz loud and long on hot days. American Goldfinches begin to nest; their late start is timed with thistle seeds ripening. The seeds nourish the finches and their young and the thistle down serves as a nest liner.

JULY

23

Look for the first flights of Canada Geese since their mid-June molt. Young geese, hatched this spring, test their flight feathers. Lake water temperatures are in the upper 70s and perfect for swimming.



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

July 26 * The first locally grown sweet corn is available. Giant sunflowers bloom in gardens. It's time for Purple Martin young to fledge. Wild blueberries are ripe in the Arrowhead.

July 27 * Wood ducks and mallards start to fly again after their molt. The second generation of eastern tiger swallowtail butterflies take flight.

July 28 * Gray Catbirds, House Finches, Red-bellied Woodpeckers and Baltimore Orioles visit grape jelly feeders.

July 31 * Chimney Swifts and Ruby-throated Hummingbirds continue feeding their nestlings.