



# MAY PHENOLOGY

## *A reflective look at 2014*

by Jim Gilbert, Naturalist

*In May, warm temperatures and rain* work to continue the greening-up process. It's a month of numerous woodland wildflowers, much bird migration and nesting activity, and usually delightful weather. 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.

**May 1** \* It's time to put out the oriole and hummingbird feeders and to watch for the first Rose-breasted Grosbeaks coming to feeding stations for sunflower seeds. House Wrens continue to arrive, filling our yards with their cheerful songs and looking for nesting boxes.

**May 2** \* The morning air is full of bird music, including American Robins and Northern Cardinals singing, Mourning Doves cooing, and Chipping Sparrows chipping.

**May 4** \* In southern MN, forsythia shrubs, daffodils and hyacinths are blooming and deciduous trees have their first tiny leaves. Farmers are about two weeks behind normal in spring planting. Only about 8 percent of the state's corn crop is seeded.

**May 6** \* The first Canada Goose goslings hatch. Dutchman's breeches, white trout-lily and marsh marigolds are blooming.

MAY

8

**A male Scarlet Tanager arrives. It's the ice-out date for Leech Lake (avg. is Apr. 28).**



**May 9** \* The first Mallard Ducklings peek out from a nest.

**May 10** \* Male Indigo Buntings visit seed feeders. Warbler migration is peaking, with 21 species observed.

**May 13** \* There's a fresh green look to urban and rural forests with new leaves on sugar maples and other trees. It's the ice-out date for Lake Vermilion near Tower (avg. is Apr. 30).

**May 17** \* Leafy canopies cast shade now in deciduous forests. Masses of common dandelions are blooming. Remember: spare the dandelions to save the bees! With relatively few flowers now, dandelions are crucial food for honeybees and other pollinators.

MAY

20

**Ovenbirds and Tennessee Warblers migrate through. White-tailed deer fawns are being born. Mushroom hunters discover the first common morels. Wild plum thickets are full of white flowers.**



**May 21** \* A first migrating monarch butterfly arrives. Common purple lilac and early crabapple trees begin blooming. It's the ice-out date for Lake of the Woods.

MAY

23

**A first Wood Duck duckling jumps from its nest.**



**May 24** \* The return of the Eastern Wood Pewee, Eastern Kingbird and Warbling Vireo signals that spring migration is coming to a close. Lawns are lush green and being mowed. Common purple lilacs burst with fragrant flowers.

**May 26** \* Purple Martins are building nests. Apple orchards are in bloom. Juvenile American Robins are leaving their nests, or *fledging*.

**May 31** \* Eastern cottonwoods begin shedding seeds on fluffy cotton carriers. In the northern part of MN, Common Loons incubate their eggs.