



ALL SEASONS  
WILD BIRD  
STORE

# May

## PHENOLOGY & CHECKLIST

Naturalist Jim Gilbert's observations from this time last year, plus a seasonal checklist of backyard tasks.

MAY

01

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 gurgling musical songs and looking for nesting boxes. Migrating **White-throated Sparrows** are numerous; they like millet and cracked corn on the ground below feeders.

MAY

03

Thickets of wild plum overflow with white flowers. Arctic phlox blooms in garden borders.

MAY

04

First florets open on common purple lilac. It's time to hunt for morel mushrooms. **Mallard Duck** eggs hatch. First American toads trill in ponds. In the Twin Cities area, and south to Northfield and St. Peter, this is the first day we really notice shade in forests from newly leafing-out deciduous trees. A few woodland wildflower species bloom, including false rue-anemone, wild ginger, wild blue phlox, and violets.



MAY

06

Cattle and horses graze on lush green pastures, and farmers work the soil and plant crops. Apple trees bloom, like Honeycrisp and Prairie Spy. The flowering tulip display at the U of MN Landscape Arboretum is a feast for the eyes. Some **Eastern Bluebirds** build nests, while others incubate eggs or feed young nestlings. The first **Cliff Swallows**, **Ovenbirds** and **Wood Thrushes** arrive. A first mosquito bites and wood ticks abound. In the Lutsen/Tofte area, deciduous tree buds swell but no new leaves emerge yet. However, the first wildflower of the year, the Canada violet, begins blooming today.

MAY

07

Ohio buckeye, eastern redbud, hyacinths, bleeding heart, daffodils, and many crabapple trees have showy flowers. Marsh marigolds bloom in wet areas, while the large-flowered trillium and jack-in-the-pulpit display their flowers in woodlands.

MAY

09



The first **Scarlet Tanagers** and **Gray Catbirds** arrive. More **Baltimore Orioles** arrive and are very vocal. Eastern tiger swallowtail butterflies are on the wing. **Common Loons** in northern MN and WI incubate eggs.

- ☐ Hang **The Best Nest Builder™**, nesting material made of cotton fibers, from a tree, shrub or shepherd's hook.



- ☐ Put out at least two **birdhouses**, one for wrens and one for chickadees. Best practice is to hang them from a pole and put a **squirrel baffle** on the pole 4-1/4' to 5' off the ground. Place the chickadee house out of direct sight line from nesting wrens, to reduce conflicts.

- ☐ Attract orioles with **nectar** (change every three days), oranges, **mealworms** and grape jelly.

- ☐ Use liquid or powder nectar with **Nectar Defender™** already added to keep your nectar fresh longer. Great for use at the cabin when larger-capacity nectar feeders will be unattended for a week. Do not use Kool-Aid®, honey, or artificial sweeteners in nectar feeders.

- ☐ Download a pdf of our **Attracting Hummingbirds** hand-out from our website for a nectar recipe, tips for cleaning nectar feeders, placing nectar feeders, planting for hummingbirds, and more: [wildbirdstore.com/resources/attracting-ruby-throated-hummingbirds/](http://wildbirdstore.com/resources/attracting-ruby-throated-hummingbirds/)



- ☐ Keep ants out of nectar by hanging a feeder from an **ant moat** filled with water or with an **Antguard®**, which repels ants.



# May

## PHENOLOGY & CHECKLIST

(Continued from front)

MAY  
12



Common purple lilac shrubs reach bloom peak and emit their memory-stirring fragrance. Field corn begins to emerge. **Barn Swallows** and **Common Nighthawks** return.

MAY  
13

First 80°F temperature this year. The first **Wood Duck** young jump from their nest box. Twenty species of migrating warblers are in the area now. **Chimney Swifts** arrive in LeSueur and Wabasha. The first **Bobolinks** arrive in the Lanesboro area. On this day of the MN Fishing Opener, water temperatures are in the 50°Fs and low 60°Fs; some walleyes are biting.

MAY  
14

First migrating monarch butterflies arrive. In Carver County, observers count 23 warbler species, 10 sparrow species, and five migrating flycatcher species.

MAY  
16



The first **Indigo Buntings** arrive at feeders. **Baltimore Orioles** converge on nectar and grape jelly feeders. Fragrant Lily-of-the-valley flowers bloom. Common tree frogs and American toads vocalize.

MAY  
19

Old-fashioned bridal wreath spirea has myriads of tiny white flowers in clusters, giving the shrubs the look of water fountains. Virginia waterleaf, columbine and wild geranium wildflowers bloom in woodlands. **Black-capped Chickadees** feed nestlings. **Red-eyed Vireos** sing their arrivals in forests. At one Northfield feeding station, 25 bird species, including **Indigo Buntings**, are coming for seeds, suet, grape jelly, and sugar water.

MAY  
24

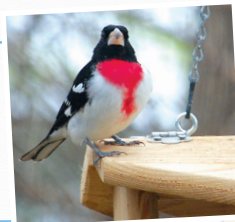
Farmers cut the first alfalfa hay. Serviceberry trees and shrubs bloom. A female **Ruby-throated Hummingbird** builds a nest.

MAY  
27

Northern Lights azaleas wow as they reach overall bloom peak. The first flowers open on wild grape vines and goatsbeard. Eastern cottonwood trees begin to shed seeds on cotton carriers. Female brown bats birth their young.

MAY  
28

The morning bird chorus is clamorous, with several dozen species including **Warbling Vireos**, **Common Yellowthroats**, **Rose-breasted Grosbeaks**, **House Wrens**, and **Gray Catbirds** filling the air with their special music.



MAY  
31

**Wild Turkey** hens guide their tiny chicks, called *poults*. Patches of ox-eye daisy burgeon. The yellow water-lily, tall bearded irises and double peonies just start to bloom.

- ☐ Deter bees from feeders by rubbing mint leaves or applying **mint extract** onto nectar ports.

- ☐ Use calcium-rich suet during egg-laying time such as **Pacific Bird and Supply Co™ suet cakes** and **Attractor™** no-melt suet plugs in various flavors.



- ☐ Scrub birdbaths with 9 parts water to 1 part bleach. Rinse well. For a safe and healthy birdbath add **Birdbath Protector** to the just cleaned bath.

- ☐ The **Water Wiggler™** attracts more birds to a birdbath and prevents mosquitoes from laying their eggs by moving the water constantly.

- ☐ Store seed in the freezer or outside the house to avoid moths. Hang a **moth trap**, available at our stores, near seed containers in the garage.

- ☐ Use **Golden Safflower** to avoid attracting grackles and starlings while still attracting cardinals, goldfinches, chickadees and House Finches.



- ☐ Serve **Bye, Bye Starling** to avoid attracting starlings while still providing a bird seed mix.

- ☐ Discourage a bird from repeatedly fighting its reflection on your window by tacking landscaping cloth over the window.