

October

PHENOLOGY & CHECKLIST

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

OCT

01

Flocks of **Cedar Waxwings** and **American Robins** feed on crabapple fruit. New England asters continue to bloom, attracting honey and bumble bees, a few late migrating monarch butterflies, and other pollinators. Beautiful fall leaves brighten Lutsen Mountains.

OCT

02



Huge flocks of migrating **Red-winged Blackbirds** and **Common Grackles** travel overhead in undulating rivers of life; sometimes these narrow streams of birds are a mile or more long.

OCT

03

Fall foliage color changes accelerate: bright reds on sumacs, golden yellows on paper birches and green ashes, and sunny yellows on wild grape and hackberry plants.

OCT

04

A windy, rainy day creates the first big leaf fall in the Twin Cities area. Fall colors peak in Itasca State Park and surrounding area.

OCT

05

Late sightings of **Ruby-throated Hummingbirds** come in: two at feeder in Northfield, and one at a feeder in LeSueur. Ruby-throats winter from south Texas to Costa Rica and Panama. They usually migrate by day but can also fly long distances at night.

OCT

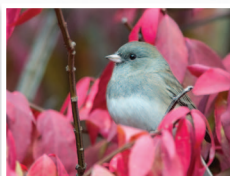
07

First snow flurries at Lutsen/Tofte, but no frost there yet. It's the time of illuminated woods: sugar maples exhibit much golden-yellow, along with reds and burnt-oranges. White-tailed deer are in their gray-brown winter coats.

OCT

08

Numerous **Dark-eyed Juncos** and **White-throated Sparrows** visit feeding stations. There's still time to plant crocus, daffodil and tulip bulbs in gardens for flowers next spring. Scattered frost touches parts of southern MN, nipping pumpkin and squash leaves. With a low of 30°F at Northfield, the first ice appears on birdbaths.



OCT

10

Migrating **warblers**, **juncos** and other birds make use of birdbaths. Beavers busily cut trees to store for winter food, which consists mainly of bark from branches of aspens, alders, birches maples, and willows. In the northern part of MN, black bears usually head for winter dens between September 24 and October 24.

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Migrating birds on the move include: **Common Loons**, **kinglets**, **Fox Sparrows**, and **Yellow-rumped Warblers**. Brussels sprouts, broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower, and leaf lettuce keep growing in cool weather.

- ☐ Blue Jays cache food in the fall. Offer **In-shell Peanuts** in a wreath-shaped **peanut feeder** or hanging tray.

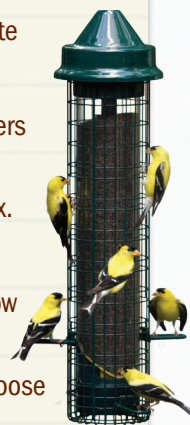


- ☐ Remember to keep your **hummingbird feeders** up until you don't see any hummers for a week, or until the nectar freezes.

- ☐ Keep feeders filled with **Golden Safflower** until the majority of grackles and starlings migrate out of the area.

- ☐ Continue to keep finch feeders full. Fill with straight **Nyjer™** or our **Nyjer™ and Chips** mix.

- ☐ If you want to update or add to your pole system, do it now before the ground freezes. We'll be glad to help you choose what's best for your yard.



- ☐ Add an **Erva 24" Quick Connect arm** to your **1" diameter pole**. The branch with three metal leaves provides a perch for the birds as well as additional places to hang feeders.



- ☐ **Medium Chips** (shelled sunflower) and **Kracker Jax** do not leave any shell mess under your feeder. Add some **dried mealworms** and **suet pellets** to any seed mix for an extra energy boost.

October PHENOLOGY & CHECKLIST

(Continued from front)

OCT
16

Short-tailed weasels begin turning from brown to white. Apple growers continue to pick late season types such as Haralson, Regent, Fireside, Keepsake, and Prairie Spy.

OCT
18

Farmers busily attempt to complete the combining of soybeans and corn; many have been slowed by wet conditions. MN is third in soybean production and fourth in corn production in the U.S.

OCT
19



Tamarack trees display beautiful smoky-gold foliage. In the Lutsen and Grand Marais area, the first **Snow Buntings** arrive. Also, **Lapland Longspurs** and **Horned Larks** migrate through.

OCT
20

Streams of **American Crows** head southwest, along the North Shore of Lake Superior. During October and into November, thousands of **Franklin's Gulls** return to Lake Waconia and some other southern MN lakes around sunset to roost on the water, then leave again at sunrise.

OCT
23

Pockets of fall leaf colors grace the landscape. **Northern Shovelers**, **Wigeons** and **Northern Pintails** are some of the migrating ducks coming through. Feeding birds can be quite exciting as an unexpected **Tufted Titmouse**, **Red-breasted Nuthatch**, or other less commonly observed species may appear at this time.



OCT
25

The rut, or mating season, begins. Look for rubs and scrapes in woodlands made by white-tailed deer bucks.

OCT
28

High of 72°F. Late snowy tree crickets call this evening. If you don't already feed wild birds and other animals, this is a perfect time to begin.

OCT
30

Lawns are still nice and green. This is the peak of the leaf raking season. Growers continue to pick Haralson and Keepsake apples.

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For the Twin Cities, Oct. 2016 is wetter and warmer than normal with 36°F as the lowest temperature so far this fall. Marigolds, zinnias, geraniums, begonias and more annuals continue to bloom. Red foliage decorates red-osier dogwoods, golden-yellows on eastern cottonwood trees, and some oaks display dark reds and rich browns.



❑ It's still a good time to watch for American Robins and Cedar Waxwings feeding on ripe berries from trees like mountain ash, viburnums, and dogwoods.

❑ Continue to provide fresh water in a **birdbath** to draw birds in closer for better viewing.

❑ Take time to clean out or take down your **birdhouses**. If you leave the houses up over the winter, open the side/bottom of the bird house to prevent mice from winter nesting.



❑ Close up **Purple Martin houses**.

❑ Give your feeders a good cleaning before winter. You can use a solution of one part bleach to 10 parts hot water or a mild solution of unscented dish detergent. Feeders should be cleaned inside and out, including all feeding ports, perches, lids and platforms. Rinse the feeders with clear water for at least 10 seconds and make sure that they're completely dry before refilling. We offer a **bird feeder cleaning service** if you'd rather have us do it!