

October


PHENOLOGY & CHECKLIST

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

OCT 01 Rain and winds bring down numerous leaves from wild grape, sugar maple and other woody plants. Last of the **Chimney Swifts** take off for South America.

OCT 02 Beautiful fall colors, mostly reds, appear on both staghorn and smooth sumacs. It's time to harvest Marquette wine grapes.

OCT 04 At the U of MN Landscape Arboretum, gardens of dahlias, annuals, and garden and shrub roses have very showy flowers. Today there are fantastic fall colors on shrubs and trees at Fergus Falls. Hawk Ridge in Duluth is a major observation site for raptor migration: 1,724 **Sharp-shinned Hawks** are counted going over today.

OCT 05  In the Lutsen area, the first **Fox Sparrows**, **American Tree Sparrows** and **Horned Larks** (shown) arrive, many **Yellow-rumped Warblers** and **Dark-eyed Juncos** continue to pass through, and quaking aspens display golden-yellow leaves.

OCT 06 Eastern cottonwoods and green ashes display striking golden-yellow foliage. MN is the nation's largest sugar beet producer; these beets are important to the economy of the Red River Valley and the west central part of the state where they are now being harvested.

OCT 07 Rafts of migrating **American Coots** paddle around on scattered southern MN lakes.

OCT 08 The normal first frost for the Twin Cities is October 8. Migrating **Dark-eyed Juncos** and **White-throated Sparrows** (shown) join **Chipping Sparrows** at feeding stations. They like millet and cracked corn scattered on the ground under feeders. Black bears in northern MN usually head for their winter dens between September 24 and October 24.



OCT 10 First frost. Tomato, cucumber, zinnia and pumpkin plants in lower areas perish. Twin Cities area lows ranged from 29°F to 34°F, while Brainerd and Marshall has 25°F, and the low at Embarrass is 18°F.

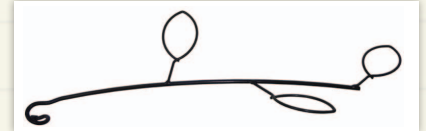
OCT 11 Second frost. 'Frontenac blanc' wine grapes are being harvested.

OCT 14 Overall peak of fall colors for the Twin Cities and larger area including Taylors Falls, Stillwater, Northfield, Faribault and LeSueur/Henderson. Big native sugar maples are especially colorful and displaying reds, burnt-oranges and golden-yellows. Nice reds and red-oranges on sumacs.

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

☐ If your yard is full of grackles, switch to serving **Golden Safflower**. It is less appealing to grackles, starlings and gray squirrels.

☐ 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 a **24-in. Quick Connect arm** (above) to your **1-in. diameter pole**. The branch with three metal leaves provides a perch for the birds as well as additional places to hang feeders.

☐ Keep a watch for the robins and waxwings feeding on berry trees, like mountain ash, viburnums, and dogwoods. Draw them in closer for better viewing with a **birdbath**.

☐ **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. These are all especially nice in **window mounted feeders**—no mess!

☐ 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 birdhouse to prevent mice from winter nesting.

October PHENOLOGY & CHECKLIST

(Continued from front)

OCT
15

A late migrating monarch butterfly flits over Waconia. So far this season at Hawk Ridge in Duluth, observers tally 3,457 **Bald Eagles**, over 17,000 **Sharp-shinned Hawks** (shown) and over 38,000 **Broad-winged Hawks** as they migrate over.



OCT
17

High of 73°F in the Twin Cities. We continue to enjoy the grand finale of the growing season: the color-splashed landscape. Many southern MN farmers are combining soybeans.

OCT
23

Red oaks are colorful with dark reds and rich browns. Tones of red tint Boston ivy vine leaves, and bright rose-red leaves cover the winged euonymus shrubs.

OCT
25

We still have some wonderful fall leaf colors to enjoy. It's the peak of leaf-raking season. Observers along the North Shore spot hundreds of **American Crows** migrating down over Highway 61 toward Duluth.

OCT
26

The last tomatoes and raspberries can still be picked from some gardens. Still blooming in gardens are: geraniums, begonias, marigolds, and more. The first-of-season flocks of **Snow Buntings** arrive in Grand Marais and the Lutsen area. MN farmers work to finish soybean and corn combining.

OCT
27

The end of the growing season, in the Twin Cities and beyond, is marked by temperatures down to upper 20°Fs, howling NW winds, light snow falling much of the day, a feeding frenzy for **Dark-eyed Juncos** and other birdfeeder birds, and the loss of tomato, begonia and other plants. The nearly 10 inches of snow at Hermantown and 15-foot-high waves crashing into Duluth brings that area into winter today.

OCT
28



Ice is on birdbaths all day. About 15 species of birds are coming to Twin Cities area feeding stations. Thousands of **Common Redpolls** (shown) arrive in the Grand Marais/Lutsen area and feast on paper birch seeds.

OCT
29

Wild Mountain, outside of Taylors Falls, became the earliest MN ski area to open this season.

OCT
31

A hard freeze this morning results in ginkgo trees dropping all their leaves. Both rubs and scrapes are being seen as the white-tailed deer *rut* (mating season) begins.

Photo by Stan Tekiela



- ☐ Close up **Purple Martin houses** (above).
- ☐ 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 dish detergent. Feeders should be cleaned inside and out, including all feeding ports, perches, lids and platforms. Rinse each feeder with clear water for at least 10 seconds and make sure that it's completely dry before refilling. We offer a **birdfeeder cleaning service** if you'd rather have us do it!
- ☐ If your poles are too short to accommodate a **squirrel baffle**, try **compressed seed cylinders** of Golden Safflower or **Flaming Hot Feast** to deter squirrels and prevent deer from licking up seed or knocking loose seed to the ground.
- ☐ Fill your **heated birdbath** with white vinegar and let it soak overnight in the house. Scrub it out to remove lime deposits and rinse before returning it outdoors.
- ☐ Fill **heated birdbaths** with cold water to reduce evaporation and ice formation along the edges.

