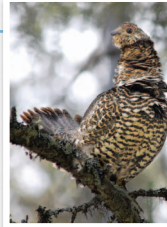




September

PHENOLOGY & CHECKLIST

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



SEP 01 Today marks the beginning of meteorological autumn. Male **Wood Ducks** are in their breeding plumage. Wild grapes attract **Ruffed Grouse** (shown), **Ring-necked Pheasants**, **Wood Ducks**, **Northern Cardinals**, robins, and other birds; plus black bears, raccoons and other mammals.

SEP 02 Acorns are falling from bur oaks and other oaks. They're a vital food source for many animals including **Wood Ducks**, **Wild Turkeys**, **Red-bellied Woodpeckers**, white-tailed deer, black bears, both red and gray squirrels, and eastern chipmunks. Migrating green darner dragonflies collect in numbers over the Lanesboro area.

SEP 03 Apple growers pick Sweetango, Paula Red, Zestar, Red Baron, Minjon, plus Chestnut crab apples. Both common and great ragweeds continue to shed plentiful pollen into the air. A good share of the **Baltimore Orioles** leave for Central America by this date each year; they are among the night migrators. Tiny, newly hatched snapping turtles head for ponds and lakes.

SEP 04 Bird migrations are well underway. Waves of **warblers** move through southern MN, as do **Common Nighthawks**, **flycatchers**, **swallows**, and various **shorebirds**.

SEP 05 Jerusalem artichoke (shown) is at bloom peak. Over two dozen wildflower species are blooming at Lutsen and along the North Shore including pearly everlasting, tall sunflower and large-leaved aster, and touches of fall colors are seen on moose maples, paper birches, and more.



SEP 06 A painted lady butterfly eruption peaks. Most flower gardens and fields of wildflowers have mini-swarms of these colorful insects. White-tailed deer bucks are in the process of shedding the fuzzy velvet covering their antlers. Fawns, born in late May or early June, are about half adult size and losing their spots.

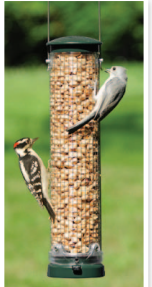
SEP 07 Growers pick ripe Wealthy apples. Mosquitoes annoy humans and animals. Giant puffball mushrooms grow, some to volleyball size.

SEP 10 **Franklin's Gulls** gather in the center of Lake Waconia for the night, starting about 4 pm. These migrants will follow farmers working fields, hoping to pick up soil organisms like worms and insects, during the day until into November. Fall-bearing raspberry canes are producing ripe fruit.

SEP 11 Today's high is 82°F, with annual cicadas buzzing. The green prime is passing. Patches of reds and burnt-oranges appear on native sugar maples and sumacs, and tones of red emerge on Virginia creeper vines. Touches of golden-yellows gleam on leaves of native basswoods, green ashes and eastern cottonwoods.

☐ Orioles leave Minnesota the first week of September and winter in the neo-tropics.

☐ Replace **oriole feeders** with **mesh feeders for Peanut Pickouts**. Red-breasted Nuthatches arrive in the fall and will feast on Peanut Pickouts and **suet**.



☐ Migrating hummingbirds will continue to visit your feeders into October. Keep your **hummingbird feeders** up until you don't see any hummers for a week or the nectar freezes.

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

☐ Keep **Nyjer feeders** full and the seed fresh. Try **Nyjer and Chips**; less mess for you and high oil content for the birds. Goldfinches are here all year. Nesting season is over and they don't need their bright yellow plumage to attract a mate and such plumage would now only attract a predator. The males' winter coloring is a dull olive green, similar to the females.

☐ Juncos are coming! Scatter some **Finches' Choice** or **Spectrum Mix** on the ground or in a ground feeder for these winter visitors. White-throated Sparrows, White-Crowned Sparrows and Mourning Doves are also ground feeders that will enjoy this treat.

September PHENOLOGY & CHECKLIST

(Continued from front)

SEP
12

Migrating monarch butterflies stop in our yards to sip the nectar from Autumn Joy sedum, New England asters and Mexican sunflowers. Most **Ruby-throated Hummingbirds** leave northern MN by Sept. 12, and the southern part of the state by Sept. 25. Be sure to keep sugar water feeders clean and filled until you are certain the hummers have all left; that could be into October. These tiny birds migrate by day or night.

SEP
15

Observers report the last **Baltimore Orioles** at a feeding station. Some farmers are cutting their fifth crop of alfalfa.

SEP
17

The first common milkweed pods open and shed seeds on carriers. Numerous black walnuts fall from trees.



SEP
18

High of 80°F. More and more red develops on sumac foliage, and golden-yellow hues appear on many eastern cottonwood leaves. Most soybean fields are displaying golden-yellow foliage, and some drop leaves as the plants mature.

SEP
21

This evening, 860 migrating **Chimney Swifts** (shown) enter a single chimney in LeSueur.



SEP
23

High of 90°F in the Twin Cities. Birds make good use of birdbaths. With lake water temperatures close to 70°F, some people still enjoy swimming.

SEP
24

Another high of 90°F in the Twin Cities. Fall foliage colors are coming on fast throughout MN. With clearing skies and northwest winds, we expect to see large numbers of raptors and non-raptors passing over Hawk Ridge in Duluth.

SEP
27

A last **Ruby-throated Hummingbird** visits a big Waconia area feeding station. Growers pick the first ripe Fireside and Keepsake apples. Virginia creeper vines reach fall color peak; their leaves in tones of red. The attractive plume-like silver-white tops of Japanese silver grass glimmer in low angle sunlight. Look for the first migrating **White-throated Sparrows** at Twin Cities-area feeding stations.

SEP
28

Field corn plants are mostly tan-brown as they dry and mature. Locally grown sweet corn is still available. At Hawk Ridge in Duluth today, counters tally 2,079 raptors, along with over 38,000 non-raptors, including 11,391 **American Robins**, 8,791 **Yellow-rumped Warblers** and 998 **Blue Jays**.

SEP
29

Numerous common milkweed pods open and shed seeds on carriers. Many garden roses continue blooming. This is the weekend to be in the hills along the North Shore of Lake Superior or in Itasca State Park and area for fall leaf-watching.

SEP
30

Painted lady butterflies are still quite abundant. Some sumac shrubs are at fall color peak. Attractive golden-yellow foliage is seen on green ash and eastern cottonwood trees.

❑ Rotate suet in **double suet feeders** by removing suet from the feeder, putting a new cake at the bottom, then replacing the older suet on top.

❑ Rotate your seed in **tube-style seed feeders** by emptying the seed from the feeder into a grocery bag, checking the feeder for cleanliness then filling the bottom half of the feeder with new seed and the top half with the seed from the grocery bag. (This is much easier with a **Quick Clean feeder**, which has an easy-release bottom!)



❑ Don't cut the seed heads from your perennials. Birds will eat these seed heads into the winter. Particularly valuable are purple coneflower, black-eyed Susan, sunflowers, and hollyhock.

❑ Indian Meal Moths are very active in September. To prevent unwanted guests, store your seed in tins on the deck, in the garage or in the shed. For easy access, store smaller quantities in the freezer. To remove moths install a **sticky trap specifically for Indian Meal Moths**—sold in our stores.

❑ Migration: September is the main month for the southward migration of warblers, vireos, grosbeaks and sparrows. Blue Jays migrate in flocks across Minnesota. Early September is the peak time for monarch migration. Track migration online at learner.org/jnorth. Hawk Ridge in Duluth hosts a major migration of Sharp-shinned, Broad-winged Hawks and others.