



# APRIL PHENOLOGY

*A reflective look at 2012*

by Jim Gilbert, Naturalist

*Every April we welcome* the greening of the grasses, the first wildflowers and the bursting of tree buds. 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.

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**Eastern Bluebirds start to lay eggs.  
Lawn mowing begins.**



**Apr. 2** \* The first of the American toads begin trilling. Backyard plum trees and thickets of wild plum display loads of white flowers. Earliest ice-out date on record for Leech Lake in Cass County.

**Apr. 8** \* Common purple lilacs fill the air with the sweet scent of their initial blossoms. Ice-out date for Lake of the Woods (average is May 3).

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**First Chipping Sparrows return.  
Ice-out for Greenwood Lake  
in Cook County (average is May 7).  
This is considered to be the last Minnesota lake  
to lose its ice cover each year.**



**Apr. 13** \* The common purple lilac, many crabapple trees, daffodils, tulips and hyacinths are flowering nicely and very showy. This year we continue to run nearly a month early in the unfolding of spring, especially noticeable in plant development.

**Apr. 14** \* First House Wren appears.

**Apr. 18** \* A Brown Thrasher is back and singing. Eastern Bluebird eggs have started hatching. The common bleeding heart and eastern redbud trees have attractive flowers. Masses of bright yellow common dandelion flowers light up sunny areas.

**Apr. 22** \* The University of Minnesota Landscape Arboretum crabapple collection is at overall peak bloom and very showy (the average flowering peak since 1971 is May 14—almost a month later!).

**Apr. 24** \* The first Barn Swallow dips and dives throughout fields in southern Minnesota. We are enjoying the visual beauty and superb fragrance of the common purple lilac, which is now at peak bloom.

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**First Canada Goose  
goslings stumble along  
behind their moms in  
open, grassy areas and  
along water edges**



**Apr. 27** \* A few southern Minnesota farmers finish planting corn.

**Apr. 29** \* During this early spring, lilacs and crabapples continue to bloom; however, 50 to 100 miles north of the Twin Cities they aren't flowering yet. At Itasca State Park and in the Lutsen/Tofte area, quaking aspen trees have tiny lime-green leaves; so far the only deciduous trees with new leaves out in the north.

**Apr. 30** \* Fragrant lilies of the valley start to bloom.

