



JULY PHENOLOGY

A reflective look at 2012

by Jim Gilbert, Naturalist

July in Minnesota is typically a month of sunny skies and is often the warmest month of the year. 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.

July 1 * Today is the 11th day of 90°F or above in the Twin Cities this year. Russian sage and many varieties of hostas bloom. In the Waconia area, the first male flowers—called tassels—top field corn (July 14, 2011).

July 2 * Today is a new record high of 99°F in the Twin Cities; the old record was 96°F set in 1911. Garden lilies overflow with blooms. Cultivated blueberries, raspberries and gooseberries are ripe and ready to pick. In the Waconia area, the first silks extend from female corn flowers, ready to receive pollen. After twelve evenings in a row of 9:03 sunsets, today's sunset is 9:02.

July 4 * We set another new record high today of 101°F. Birds swarm to birdbaths. Pileated Woodpeckers, Cedar Waxwings and Brown Thrashers relish wild chokecherries. Lake Waconia's water temperature is a tepid 84°F and Leech Lake is 82°F. In the evening, fireflies flicker their tiny lights.



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Shorebirds gather to begin migration, including Lesser Yellowlegs, Least Sandpipers and Solitary Sandpipers.

July 6 * American Robins kick off the morning chorus at 4:34 am. Tiny Dickcissels, whose breeding areas fluctuate from year to year, are numerous in Minnesota this summer. With a high of 102°F, it's the 8th day of our heat wave. Lawns begin to show patches of dry, tan-brown areas.

July 7 * The first locally grown sweet corn is now available. Heaps of conspicuous wildflowers—including bee balm, purple prairie clover, purple coneflower and compass plant—blanket natural and restored prairie areas.

July 12 * Snowy tree crickets call for the first time tonight in Golden Valley.

July 14 * Colorful birds and their young readily visit clean feeders and birdbaths. Evening skies display fantastic northern lights above the entire state.

July 15 * With a high of 90°F in the Twin Cities today, it's our 20th instance of 90°F or above this year. Deerflies irritate us during the day, and mosquitoes menace us at night. Hoards of mayflies cloud the skies in Hastings.

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Common ragweed starts to shed pollen (Aug. 2 in 2011). Green frogs call at night. The first Canada Geese can fly now after their spring molt.

July 20 * Joe-pye weed, blue vervain and purple loosestrife bloom in wet roadside ditches. A new generation of monarch butterflies takes flight, weeks after their predecessors.

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About 250 White Pelicans and 200 Great Egrets stage for migration near New Germany, Minnesota.



July 30 * Annual cicadas buzz on this warm day. Bur oak acorns fall to the ground. Blueberries are still abundant along the Gunflint Trail, especially in areas where a fire raged just over 5 years ago.

July 31 * Each day in the Twin Cities this month had a high temperature of at least 80°F. Many snowy tree crickets call this evening—together they sound like sleigh bells!