

JULY PHENOLOGY

A reflective look at 2011

by Jim Gilbert, Naturalist

In July, temperatures climb as hillsides overflow with ripening fruit and fields erupt with wildflowers. 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's high is 99°F. An American Crow rests in the shade with its beak open to cool off. Surface temperatures of most lakes are in the mid-70s—perfect for swimming.

A male Ruby-throated Hummingbird does a pendulum display: he swings back and forth in the sky before diving toward his mate. At the bottom of the dive, he makes a loud, explosive noise to impress the female.



July 3 * Summer birds fill the skies with sound: House Wrens, Yellow Warblers, Warbling Vireos and Northern Cardinals sing; Mourning Doves coo; and Eastern Wood Pewees call. Ospreys, Eastern Kingbirds, Great Crested Flycatchers, Purple Martins, Baltimore Orioles and clay-colored sparrows busily feed nestlings.

July 4 * Field corn is close to knee high. The first hollyhocks bloom and new staghorn sumac fruit clusters ripen as the country celebrates its independence.



Birds begin to sing at 4:34 am, starting with American Robins.

July 7 * Native basswood trees begin to bloom. Common Nighthawks populate the skies over downtown St. Paul.

July 10 * Cicadas buzz for the first time and jewelweeds bloom. Common milkweed blooms showy flower clusters.

July 14 * Hostas bloom, providing another source of nectar for Ruby-throated Hummingbirds. Field corn develops tassels and soybeans bloom.

July 17 * Garden blueberries are ready to pick. It's hot and humid, with lake temperatures reaching 80°F. Annual cicadas continue to buzz 20 minutes after sunset.

Today's high is 98°F, with tropical dew points. Northern Cardinals, House Wrens and Warbling Vireos sing in the heat. Shorebirds move through the area just as the first giant sunflowers bloom in backyard gardens.



July 20 * Gardeners thrill at the first full-size tomatoes. At Leech Lake, vacationers swim in 76°F water while Purple Martins sing.

July 22 * A monster heat wave sweeps through the United States. Lake Waconia's water temperature reaches 84°F, and lawns begin to brown. Sounds of Red-eyed Vireos and Chipping Sparrows fill the skies.

July 27 * The second generation of eastern tiger swallowtail butterflies take flight.

July 29 * Locally grown sweet corn is available.

July 31 * The first snowy tree crickets call and the first Carolina grasshoppers fly.



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