

October Phenology

a reflective look at 2009

by Jim Gilbert



1 Black walnuts falling off trees in large numbers. Sunny-yellow leaves showy on wild grape vines.

2 Near Tofte, along the Sawbill Trail, there is a nice mixture of fall colors.

3 Migrating White-throated Sparrows and Dark-eyed Juncos come to our feeding stations announcing that, whether we like it or not, cold weather is on the way.

6 Beautiful burnt-oranges, golden-yellows and reds on sugar maple foliage in the Metro area.

9 From the St. Croix Valley through the Twin Cities and to the Mankato area, it's overall fall color peak day, considering the many trees, shrubs and vines showing autumn splendor. Also, the first hard frost and cold temperatures kill tomato, coleus and other annual garden plants.

10 First ice on birdbaths and first snowfall in the Metro: a dusting in the Twin Cities, but 2" at Duluth and 3" at Isabella.

12 Second snowfall: 2.5" at Twin Cities' airport and up to 4.5" in other parts of Twin Cities. Eager children build the first snow sculptures with the wet snow. A Ruby-throated Hummingbird seen in St. Peter at a feeder.

14 Migrating Red-winged Blackbirds and Common Grackles seen moving in airborne long-flowing, river-like streams.

17 Migrating American Robins numerous and vocal.

18 Apple growers are picking Honeygold, Haralson, Regent and Fireside apples.

20 Amur maple trees displaying striking tones of red and golden-yellow foliage.

21 Tamarack trees at peak of fall color.

23 Another very late migrating Ruby-throated Hummingbird seen in Victoria. First Pine Siskins of the season arrive at a feeding station at Lutsen.

27 Balmy temperature of 55 degrees. Painted turtles sunning themselves on logs in ponds. Over 8,000 Sandhill Cranes gather in Crex Meadows near Grantsburg, Wis. Thousands of American Coots there, too. Juncos are abundant, and Homed Larks and Snow Buntings also seen.

29 Red oaks are displaying their fall colors of reds and browns. Haralson, Regent and Fireside apples continue to be picked in southern Minnesota.

30 Some sugar maples still have golden-yellow leaves.

31 First large flock of Tundra Swans flies over Lake Waconia. Snow Geese migrating over Afton State Park.



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