



# SEPTEMBER PHENOLOGY

*A reflective look at 2012*

by Jim Gilbert, Naturalist

*September is a transition month.* Back-to-school clothes hang in closets, yet to be worn, for much of the month while summery weather persists. Fall migration continues in earnest. 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 2013 with last year.

**September 1** \* This is the first day of meteorological autumn. The prime green months are past; patches and tinges of fall foliage colors begin to appear. Orb spider webs sparkle on dewy mornings. Monarch butterflies trickle south; their numbers are fewer now. Huge numbers of green darner dragonflies migrate through the state.

**September 2** \* Wood Ducks feed on recently fallen acorns. Flights of migrating Common Nighthawks continue over the Twin Cities.

SEPT.

3

**Growers pick Honeycrisp apples, our official state apple since 2006. McIntosh and Chestnut crabs are also ready to pick. Red-breasted Nuthatches arrive at feeding stations in southern Minnesota.**



**September 4** \* Water temperatures of area lakes are in the upper 70°Fs and perfect for swimming. Common cattails and common milkweeds shed their first downy seeds.

SEPT.

5



**Wild spotted touch-me-nots, growing "where they can keep their feet wet," are among the many flowers attracting Ruby-throated Hummingbirds.**

**September 8** \* The last Baltimore Orioles depart. Nuts fall from black walnut and Ohio buckeye trees. Harvest of our state grain, wild rice, continues in northern Minnesota.

**September 11** \* Today's high is 95°F; the 31st day of 90°F or above this year. Common ragweed still sheds plentiful pollen. This is a bad hay fever season, no doubt because it's so dry.

SEPT.

15

**Rafts of migrating American Coots cluster on Lake Waconia for the fall season. Most Ruby-throated Hummingbirds leave northern Minnesota by today.**



**September 14** \* Migrating flocks of Franklin's Gulls return as waves of warblers such as Chestnut-sided and Canada Warblers trace their migration paths south. A big kettle of turkey vultures migrates over Northfield.

**September 16** \* Migrating monarch butterflies are now quite scarce, no doubt because of drought conditions.

**September 21** \* Waves of sparrows—mostly Lincoln's and White-throated Sparrows—pass through our state. Common Yellowthroats, Nashville, Mourning and other warblers also visit briefly while heading south.

**September 22** \* Today is the autumnal equinox, the start of astronomical fall. The sun is in such a position today that every place on Earth receives 12 hours of daylight and 12 hours of night.

**September 23** \* Today is the first frost over much of southern and central Minnesota. Zinnias, morning glories, squash and pumpkin vines, tomato and pepper plants perish. White-throated Sparrows visit feeding stations.

**September 25** \* The first Dark-eyed Juncos appear today.

**September 28** \* Cedar Waxwings and American Robins feed on mountain ash and crabapple fruit.

**September 30** \* Statewide, corn is 53% harvested (5% is the five-year average), and the soybean harvest is 76% complete (23% is average).