



Hidden Pond Nature Center

May Almanac, 2024



Natural events, happenings and fearless predictions based upon 45 years of observations at Hidden Pond. Your observations may vary! Hidden Pond is not responsible for errors, erratic behavior or other whims of nature.

First Week

Red admiral butterflies pass through on their way north. Leaves have fully emerged. When maple leaves are as big as your fist, it is a sign that it's safe to plant corn. Our local marsupial, the opossum, has as many as 13 young, which emerge now from mother's pouch. They will remain with the mother for several months. Pink lady's slippers are in bloom; these wild orchids require a specific soil fungus to grow. Black Locust trees bloom with white pea-like fragrant flowers. The call of the gray tree frog, a ragged drawn-out chirp sometimes mistaken for a bird call, may be heard coming from the treetops. Their scientific name *Hyla versicolor* reflects the fact that they can change their skin color to match the bark of the tree they are clinging on.

Second Week

Spectacular luna moths emerge from the cocoons in which they spent the winter. They mate, lay eggs on walnut, persimmon or hickory trees, and then die. Young cardinals and robins have fledged (left the nest.) Not yet able to fly, the fledglings continue to receive care from their parents. White-eyed vireos have arrived from South America; heard more often than seen, they seem to say "Quick, under the window Chip!" or something similar. Spring ephemerals (wildflowers that appear only briefly) have withered and been absorbed back into the forest floor.

Third Week

Snapping turtles excavate nest sites in sunny places and lay their eggs, sometimes hundreds of feet from water. The sex of baby turtles is in part determined by the temperature of the site; warm sites favor females, cooler sites favor males. Ox-eye daisies are in bloom. Tiny American toads about one centimeter long, the result of this year's spawning, leave the water, many usually eaten by birds.

Fourth Week

The full Flower Moon is May 23. Japanese honeysuckle and multiflora rose, two invasive but fragrant plants, as well as magnolia, fill the air with perfume. Mountain laurel is in bloom. Shad bush berries ripen; robins and catbirds seem reckless in their determination to eat every last berry. First lightning bugs or fireflies, which are actually beetles, appear at nightfall. They include movement with their flash, which for some species gives the impression that the beetles are constantly ascending. Help fireflies by keeping your lawn chemical free. Bull frogs lay eggs, their tadpoles will take a year or more to develop into adult frogs.



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