



Hidden Pond Nature Center

April Almanac, 2024



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

“Look deep into nature, and then you will understand everything better.” - Albert Einstein

First Week

The redbud tree *Cercis canadensis* is now in bloom. The magenta pea-like flowers of this small tree add spectacular color to our wooded hillsides. Red maple flowers turn into wine-colored winged seeds. Pastel green tulip poplar and sycamore leaves emerge. Pickerel frogs, spring peepers, cricket frogs and chorus frogs call now for mates. American toads usually spawn and their call is a long trill, sounding like something from outer space. Eggs appear as long strings.

Second Week

A partial solar eclipse will be visible on April 8. The small native shad bush tree *Amelanchier canadensis*, now in bloom along stream and riverbanks in tidal areas. These trees are reminders of historic people living in the area of the shad fish migration, the reason the shad bush was given that name. The forest floor is now carpeted with spring beauties, trout lilies, cut-leaved toothwort, trillium and Virginia bluebells. Canada geese usually begin to incubate their eggs now. White-throated sparrows depart for Canada. These birds are relatively quiet during the winter, they now seem to sing “sweet, sweet, Canada Canada Canada”. Gold finch males now molt into dazzling yellow plumage.

Third Week

The oaks are in bloom, their catkins release clouds of pollen coating sidewalks, cars and pets. Dogwood blossoms are at peak. Sadly, many wild dogwoods have disappeared due to disease. Some are replaced by invasive cultivars such as the Bradford pear which have white flowers but are weak and the flowers stink. Morel hunters head for their secret woodland places to search for these tasty mushrooms. Tiger swallowtail butterflies emerge from pupa, mate and lay their eggs on wild cherry tree leaves.

Fourth Week

Full “Pink” moon appears on April 23. New foliage provides cover so that cardinals, robins and mockingbirds can begin nest building. Hummingbirds and chimney swifts usually arrive now. Bluebirds, a year-round resident, may use a nest box to raise up to three families each summer. Pink Lady’s Slippers bloom, usually dusted with oak pollen. Warbler migration is at peak. Wild azalea blossoms have a sweet fragrance. Domestic azaleas, though showier, do not have the fragrance the native shrubs do. In the early evening, the flute-like call of the newly arrived wood thrush fills the forest with the sound of summer. Carolina wren eggs hatch and the nestlings, usually 5 or 6, will leave the nest in about 12 days.



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