

## A Look at the Season's Main Events

By Virginia Barlow

### June

### July

### August

#### FIRST WEEK

June 3: Saturn will be at its closest to Earth. Its rings and brightest moons can be seen using a medium-sized telescope / Beginning of firefly displays. Also called lightning bugs, these insects are really beetles, not flies or bugs / Beavers are switching from their winter menu of bark to a summer diet of grasses and herbs, especially aquatic plants / Sapsuckers are excavating new nest cavities. Aspen trees infected by the false tinder fungus are preferred. Look for hoof-shaped brackets, which are the fruiting bodies of this fungus

July 4: The Juno spacecraft is scheduled to reach Jupiter after a five-year journey. It will orbit the planet until October 2017, when it will crash into Jupiter / The flowering of Queen Anne's lace, chicory, and St. Johnswort signals the end of spring and the beginning summer / Great horned owls are catching skunks, rats, hares, muskrats, and even large birds to feed their growing chicks / Japanese beetles are out of the ground and heading for the roses

When all the honey bees are headed home, expect rain within half-an-hour / Red eft is the name given to juvenile red spotted newts that leave the ponds where they were born to live on land for four or five years before returning to the water / Short-tailed shrews use echolocation, echoes from high-pitched squeaks, when traveling in their dark tunnels / In summer, deer roam on a fairly small territory, about 200 acres, though bucks range farther than does

#### SECOND WEEK

Unlike most other birds, bitterns don't use their syrinx (voice box) to make the "thronk" noise that now emanates from wet places; they gulp in air and let it out as a loud belch / Pear thrips larvae drop to the ground and enter the soil / The beautifully colored rosy maple moth – pink, white, yellow – is on the wing. The larvae, called green-striped mapleworms, occasionally cause significant defoliation / Pink lady's slippers are blooming in dry woods

Ring-necked snakes are laying eggs beneath rotting logs. They will hatch in August or September / Regal fritillaries (*Speyeria idalia*) are flying. The larvae of all the butterflies in this genus feed only on violets. The adults aren't so fussy and they get nectar from many other flowers / Within 24 hours of hatching and well before they can fly, wood ducklings drop many feet from the nest cavity to water without injury / Canada lilies are now at their best

August 12: The Perseid Meteor Shower peaks, at a time when the moon will set around midnight. This might be a better-than-usual year, so look on August 11 as well / Broad-winged hawk fledglings are leaving the nest but they'll rely on their parents for food for at least another couple of weeks / Field crickets and ground crickets sing day and night. Katydid usually wait till dark / Male scarlet tanagers are looking strange as they molt from red to green

#### THIRD WEEK

The full moon on June 20 was called the Full Strawberry Moon by early Native Americans. June 20 is the summer solstice in the northern hemisphere / Fox kits begin to tag along on their parents' hunting trips / Look for yellow robber flies hanging around beehives, sometimes gobbling up pollen-laden bees as they come home from work / Showy lady's slippers are blooming in fens and wooded swamps. They rarely self-pollinate and rely mostly on bees for pollination

The fleshy appendages on a star-nosed mole's snout, though small, have five times as many nerves as a human hand. These sensory organs have been referred to as the "nose that looks like a hand but acts like an eye" / The large hooded flowers of turtlehead, found in wet areas, are pollinated by bumblebees. The bees disappear inside the large tubular flowers, which jiggle as the bees rummage for nectar / Young grouse are the size of pigeons and can fly

August 18: Different early Native American tribes called this full moon the Full Sturgeon Moon, the Green Corn Moon, or the Grain Moon / Snapping turtle eggs begin to hatch. At just over an inch long, the tiny hatchlings head for water after digging their way up to the surface / The messy nests of fall webworms are beginning to be visible near the tips of tree branches, especially along roads / Cardinal flowers are blooming. They are as red as red can be

#### FOURTH WEEK

Sapsucker nestlings are noisy. Listen in hardwood stands to find their nest cavity / Sprouts from Japanese knotweed root fragments can reach the surface even when they're buried three feet deep. And they can get through two inches of asphalt / Listen for the three paired notes of the indigo bunting. They usually sing from the tops of trees or posts / Young Baltimore orioles are leaving the nest. They have cute short tails and are being fed by the parents

Male gypsy moths begin flying / The red fruits of bunchberry are ripening. The berries stay on this small plant for a long time and ruffed grouse and a few other birds eat them / Loon chicks need an area of shallow water, stocked with plants, crayfish, invertebrates, and small fish / White pine sawyers emerge. Often confused with the Asian longhorned beetle, this native species is smaller and has a distinct white spot where the forewings meet the thorax

August 27: A conjunction of Venus and Jupiter. These two planets will be less than one degree apart. Look to the west just after sunset / Milkweed pods are full-sized / Now is the time to dig up this year's burdocks, before this biennial produces the sticky burrs that will get tangled in the dog's fur / Ospreys are getting ready for their long trip south, all the way to South America / Star-nosed moles can swim underwater in search of aquatic invertebrates

*These listings are from observations and reports in our home territory at about 1,000 feet in elevation in central Vermont and are approximate. Events may occur earlier or later, depending on your latitude, elevation – and the weather.*