



Nature Notes

Todmorden Mills Wildflower Preserve

Nature Notes for the Week May 24–May 30

Spring is well underway, and suddenly Todmorden looks lush and green as the tree canopy leafs-out. Here are some sights and sounds that you can expect this week in the Preserve.



Wildflowers

The **White Trilliums** have faded to deep pink and most of the early woodland spring ephemerals such as Trout Lily, Bloodroot and Downy Yellow Violets have finished flowering. But you can see **Mayapple** flowers this week, and, if you've never seen the waxy white flower of the Mayapple, it's worth peering under the wide umbrella-like leaves.

Along the trail-edge, and in sunnier places, look for some of the native wildflowers that have been re-introduced to Todmorden, especially **Wild Columbine**, **Starry False Solomon's Seal**, and **Virginia Waterleaf**. **Dame's Rocket**, which produces flowers ranging from white to deep pink, is just starting to flower. This plant has become naturalized in the Preserve, and may be a threat to native wildflowers.



Trees and Shrubs

Most trees are fully leafed out now, and some have produced fruit. Squirrels are busy eating **Manitoba Maple** keys, and recent winds have blown **Elm** fruit onto the ground. The **Chokecherry** shrubs, one of the more common understorey species at Todmorden, have nearly finished flowering and the creamy sprays are fading to yellow. The **Hawthorns** and invasive **Tartarian Honeysuckle** should still be in full bloom.



Frogs and Turtles

The adult **Green Frogs** that overwintered in the mud at the bottom of the pond have emerged. On sunny days you'll likely see them sitting half-submerged at the pond edge. Listen for the males giving the characteristic "glug" call which has been likened to the plucking of a loose banjo string. The **Red-eared Slider** turtles are wary but a quiet approach should reward you with views of them basking on logs in the pond.



Birds

The tail-end of the warbler migration passed through last week, and the suite of insectivorous birds feasted on early caterpillars on the Crack Willows in particular.

Two of our resident insectivorous birds, the **Northern Oriole** and the **Yellow Warbler** started nesting this week. You should get views of the bright orange male Oriole which has a territory at the pond. The Yellow Warbler is more often heard than seen, so listen for the male singing his stuttering song which seems to truncate too quickly.

The noisy and belligerent **Red-winged Blackbirds** are nesting in the tall marsh plants fringing the pond and in the oxbow.



Insects

Bumblebees, **solitary bees** and **pollen-eating hoverflies** are crowding the flowering trees and shrubs at present. And the **mosquitoes** are back, especially through the swamp section from the Pond to just north of the stairs, so dress appropriately and bring some repellent.