



Nature Notes

Todmorden Mills Wildflower Preserve

Your nature guide for the week June 21–June 27

Some of our earliest wild berry fruits are now ripe.



Fruit

The arrival of farm-grown Ontario strawberries in the stores is a clue that the native **Wild Strawberry** at the Preserve is now producing fruit. Although Wild Strawberries are much smaller than commercial varieties, their flavour is no less intense and they are a favourite of Robins and Chipmunks. Look for them on drier, sunny sites at the edge of woodlands.

The **Serviceberry** is one of the earliest shrubs to bear ripe fruit. The clusters ripen unevenly and Cedar Waxwings and Robins visit regularly and pluck the dark-red berries. At drier sites along the woodland trail, **Red-berried Elderberry** berries have ripened to a deep crimson. A close relative, the **Common Elderberry**, which favours wetter sites and has been planted at the pond, has yet to flower.



Insects

The **White Tail** dragonflies never stray far from water which they require for breeding, but you are just as likely to encounter them flying over the meadows or sunning on the boardwalk. The male has a conspicuous pale pastel-blue abdomen. In the meadow and woodland glades, watch for the **Little Wood Satyr**, which seems especially abundant this year. The wings of this attractive butterfly are a soft brown with prominent "eye-spots". It has an erratic, sluggish flight which makes it easy to follow, and it is quite approachable.



Trees

It is easy to recognize the **American Elms**, since the larger trees have been hit with significant leaf die-back. In some cases, whole limbs have died. While the first suspect would be Dutch Elm Disease, there are several other fungi which can cause leaf wilt.



Flowers

The introduced and invasive **Multiflora Rose** continues to produce clusters of bright white flowers which are very noticeable around the edges of the woodland. At several places along the woodland trail, you can find **Purple-flowering Raspberry** which is just starting to flower. This understory shrub has big pink flowers and the distinctive bright-green leaves are similar in shape to the leaves of maples.

Contrary to last week's report of the impending demise of flowering irises, **Blue Flag** continues to provide a wonderful display, especially in the oxbow near the stairs. A special treat this week is the large white flat-topped flower clusters of the regionally-rare **Cow Parsnip**. Standing over two metres high, it towers over other plants in the wet meadow near the boardwalk.



Frogs

Last year's **Green Frog** tadpoles overwintered and have now transformed into juvenile frogs. Juveniles usually leave the home pond and disperse. Males will not be fully adult until next year; females can take two years to reach sexual maturity.

More Info

For more information about the Todmorden Mills Wildflower Preserve, please visit the Preserve Web site (www.hopscotch.ca/tmwp), or contact the Todmorden Mills Heritage Museum (Tel: 416 396-2819).

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