



JULY NATURAL EVENTS
GSWA ECOLOGICAL RESTORATION SITE

Tremblav's Salamander



Rose Breasted Cross Beak



1. June has left July with a profusion of next generations. Look for freshly fledged baby birds being feed by parents on the ground and in the low lying understory.
2. Milkweeds, both swamp and common are in bloom on the property. These members of the family *Asclepius* are virtual insect magnets. Look closely at all parts of this plant for the many species that feed, lay eggs, nectar, and pollinate this plant. Some examples: Milkweed bug, milkweed beetle, ants, monarch butterfly, yellow jackets, and bumble bees. You may even catch a glimpse of a ruby-throated hummingbird sipping nectar from the flower heads.
3. Ebony Jewelwing damselflies still hanging around the Silver Brook. These incredible damselflies will beam their irridescence from the ends of low-hanging vegetation facing the sun with their abdomens leaning in the vertical in what odontologists cal the "obelisk" position. I call it sunworshiping.
4. Elderberry is a shrub that you can see in bloom in our deer enclosure directly along the entrance path. The radiating flowers produce an arrangement that botanists term an umbel. When the flowers become berries let the feast begin. These drupes are relished by songbirds and won't last long once ripened. Thrashers, catbirds, red-eyed vireos, and woodland thrushes scoff them up faster than hotdog eating contest in Coney Island.
5. Green frogs croak their banjo-like pluck in our wet ditches and ponds in an attempt at attracting females.
6. Black cherry trees are out of bloom and have gone to berry which is high on the list of wildlife food. Cotton tail rabbits, fox, raccoons, white footed mice and my personal favorite the grey squirrel have all been known to feed on the hanging fruit. Grey squirrels will climb the tree and cut the berry-stalks so that the fruit falls to the ground where it returns to feast at their leisure.
7. Mites form the formation of the cherry pouch galls, commonly seen on black cherry leaves in spring and summer. These many protrusions look like little reddish-green fingers – very extraterrestrial. A gall is a localized growth on a plant induced by a fungus or egg laying or feeding of certain mites and insect larvae, especially aphids, gall gnats, and gall wasps.
8. For you beetle people out there our garden will boast the following Coleopterans in July – Willow leaf beetles, milkweed beetles, spotted cucumber beetle, elder borer, eastern eyed click beetle, and unfortunately the invasive Japanese beetle.



Green Frogs in Amplexus

Text and Photos by Blaine Rothauer