

JUNE 15 – 30, 2019 NATURAL HISTORY NOTES

By Dick Harlow

GARDENS

Man (in this case Man is meant as gender neutral) has ways of helping nature without really realizing that is what he is doing. But, at the same time, he could be destroying the very help he has so engendered.



Flower Garden, June, © Dick Harlow

Gardens, flower gardens or vegetable gardens or any facsimile of both in the same plot are initially a boon to all kinds of organisms. When in fact insects or rodents, not to our liking, want to share in this habitat we tend to do whatever it takes to put a stop to it, usually by killing the intruders. Death seems to be our mantra for dealing with this kind of problem.

However, there are those individuals who feel we should look for less drastic consequences for those that wish to share our space, our garden habitat. The word organic or non-poisonous are words that might suggest a way toward that end.

Every animal and every plant have non-toxic characteristics or situations that they will not tolerate. If we know what those are without resorting to some form of poison or other form of death for the intruder, we then have learned how to remove a competitor from our space. That may not be a form of sharing, but it is certainly more responsible than resorting to killing the intruder at every step.

If Meadow Voles dig up a part of our garden in the fall and winter, should we resort to elimination? Ever since I've been gardening here at EastView, 2013-present, we have had Meadow Voles take up residence three of those years. I personally did not see them function in my garden after spring cleaning cleared out the garden getting ready for summer and fall. As far as I know I did not; nor did my gardener do anything that would have discouraged the voles beyond eliminating any cover they had before the cleaning.



Flower Garden, July, © Dick Harlow

What I do know is that we have had Red Fox and Coywolf frequent our gardens during the night. We also have harriers and hawks frequent our yard during the day. That is a form of sharing that I am personally in favor of.

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On the other hand, some of the insect malcontents that enjoy munching on flower and plant leaves present similar concerns. Providing places for predatory insects, such as spiders or predatory beetles, to flourish in your garden is a natural way to help minimize the damage the munchers can do. If a muncher is the caterpillar of a butterfly, I have been known to ignore the muncher and let it feed away.



Flower Garden, July, © Dick Harlow

Also, growing plants that by their odor or inedible parts might also provide a means to discourage herbivores is another method to look into. If a favorite food item for a rabbit is surrounded by plants it dislikes or will stay away from, you have solved the problem without resorting to poison, traps or some other death-nell other than what is natural.



Flower Garden, August, © Dick Harlow

There is something satisfying about being involved with nature without destroying a part of it, but instead sharing as best we can.

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OBSERVATIONS

Cool, rainy, cloudy weather with intermittent sun and warmth until the 22nd-24th when we had sun and gorgeous blue skies, temps in the high 70's to low 80's not withstanding!

The average precipitation for Middlebury in May and June is 91.4 mm or 3.6 inches. May and June have had above average rainfall, 5.2" in May and 6.5 inches in June with generally cooler temperatures and almost half the month was cloudy.

MOTHS

Giant Silkworm Moths

Promethea Moth

Cecropia Moth

Hawk Moths

Gallum Sphinx Moth



Promethea Moth, *Callosamia promethea*, female, dorsal view, front door side window, early AM, 16 June 2019 © Dick Harlow

Two views of this Promethea Moth showing the dorsal side and part of the ventral wing. Beautiful large moth.

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Promethea Moth, *Callosamia promethea*, female, ventral view, front door side window, early AM, 16 June 2019 © Dick Harlow



Gallum Sphinx Moth, *Hyles gallii*, 18 June, 2019, discovered by the Klines. © Dick Harlow

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BIRDS

Interesting observation - the **Eastern Kingbird**, a flycatcher, seen June 23rd, was seven weeks late. Normally the first observation is in the second week of May.

Is the lateness due to the cool-wet spring or lack of flying insects for food, or both? Or are we seeing effects due to climate change?

BUTTERFLIES

Normally, by the end of June, we have observed both the common Cabbage White and the Clouded Sulphur Butterflies. Both like open areas preferring meadow plants, e.g. clovers and crucifers. However, we have observed only a single Cabbage White on 29 June and no Clouded Sulphur this month flying or resting. Very unusual for EastView.

Canadian Tiger Swallowtail Cabbage White



Canadian Tiger Swallowtail, *Papilio canadensis*,
25 June 2019 © Dick Harlow

MAMMALS

Interesting that other than Coywolves being heard and a Gray Squirrel at the bird feeder, as well as one White-tailed Deer sighted amongst the tall grass in the meadow, there have been few tracks along South Pond's edge and no other sightings for the month. Depressions on the grass or depressive grass paths is all we have to go on.

White-tailed Deer Gray Squirrel

Weather Tidbits

Month of JUNE 1-30, 2019

[*All Measurements taken at solar noon \(1230 EST\).*](#)

PRECIPITATION

Total Precipitation: 165.8 mm or 6.5 inches

Overcast Days: 14 = 47% for the month.