

September

September in Falmouth is a golden time, with the lingering warmth and lowering light angle; it is a great time to go for a walk after the throngs of summer have left. Consider walking around Long Pond*, or to the marsh overlooks at Sea Farms*. Here are some thoughts about what to expect in September:



Poison Ivy “Leaves of three, leave it be.” and **Virginia Creeper** vines turn red.

Virgin’s Bower Clematis blooms, covering its vines with five-petaled white flowers. The distinctive feathery seed heads persist into fall.

The **ocean water is warm** enough to support hurricanes, and the warm inshore waters gives us back the warmth we missed in the spring.

Birds from the north are to be found in thickets all over town. Look for them around the edges of Peterson Farm* and along the Bike Path, but they can show up anywhere, especially after a north wind.

The **equinox** is around the 21st. Daylight and dark are of equal length, 12 hours—presaging the shorter days and longer hours of darkness ahead.

Wild grapes ripen. You often can smell the spicy, grapey fragrance before you spot them. Look for Catbirds, Cardinals and Robins feeding on grapes and other wild fruits.

Red hues dominate the wet woods and pond edges as **Tupelo and Red Maple** reach their peak of color ahead of the golden or russet oaks and hickories.

Terns have mostly left Falmouth by late summer, though a few return from their gatherings on the Lower Cape to fish. Now they leave the Cape entirely, not to return until April.

Green Darner dragonflies migrate through our area in late summer and can often be seen flying low above grasslands, especially near water.



*Greater Yellowlegs. Photo by Craig Gibson
Calendar by Beth Schwarzman*

Monarch butterflies are common in gardens and on blooming asters as they pass though on their way south. These are the children and grandchildren of the ones we saw in June.

Acorns and hickory nuts ripen; squirrels collect them and store them for winter, often by burying them in the soil. Those that are forgotten may sprout next year, starting new trees.

Salt marshes turn golden as the grasses set seed and begin to die.

Flocks of **Goldfinches** feed on the seeds of Birch trees and tall seed-bearing plants like **Evening Primrose** in unmowed meadows.

*Trail maps at www.300committee.org

Preserving Open Space for Falmouth

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