From the North Shore of Little Rock Lake in Benton Co. MN
DECEMBER 2013 WEATHER AND PHENOLOGY IN REVIEW

Jim Hovda, Rice, MN 56367-0265 jhovda.rice@jetup.net

WEATHER: A lot colder than last year. Last December the average low was 10.48 degrees (F) with only eight days logging zero or below zero readings. Last December was a wimpy month. This year, I recorded fifteen days of zero or below zero readings. The coldest day occurred on the 30th when the thermometer displayed -23 degrees below zero (F). I'm guessing that the reason everyone is complaining about the cold weather is because all the cold was spread out throughout the entire month, not all in one cold weather blast. And, unlike last year, there were no 50 degree (F) readings. Wind chills were in the -30's to -40's (F) on many occasions. It was even colder in Northern MN. The warmest day was on the 1st with a 39 degree reading. We are starting January with, again, below zero temps. (-45 (F) in Embarrass MN. It was the 10th coldest December according to Professor Bob Weisnman, SCSU.

Snow! There was no lack of it. It snowed on twenty-four days, of which fifteen were measurable. I thought I was shoveling every day! The 18.7 inches of snow melted to an even 2 inches of liquid. Last year we received 15.1 inches but most of it came on one shot in the middle of the month. The most snow this December fell on the 5th when I measured 4.7 inches of the white stuff. So far this year 17.8 inches have graced us. According to Professor Bob Weisman, SCSU, this was the 7th snowiest and 8th wettest Dec on record. I longingly looked at my riding lawn mower resting near the snow blower, waiting for spring and summer.

LOCAL WEATHER RECORDS IN DECEMBER: The coldest December temperature was a chilly -42 degrees (F) in 1884 while in 1939 it was short-sleeves on the 6th when a reading of 63 degrees (F) was recorded. A 107 degrees difference. Oh well, it's Minnesota! We did not even come close to breaking the snowfall record of 29.7 inches in 2008.

PHENOLOGY: Just some odds & ends. Our flying squirrel finally reappeared at our feeder. And for the first time in a month or so, a grey squirrel finally showed up. It was only one and was only here for a day. I cannot figure out why they disappeared. Up to the middle of the month a grackle was at the feeder. It must have missed the migration. I have not seen it since the 11th. Maybe it fell victim to the very cold weather? The 11th also ushered in a flock of wild turkeys. They have been a persistent pain in the rear, eating nearly every seed in sight. The blue jays, as many as seventeen at the feeders at one time, have been eating huge chunks of suet, making me go to Foley once a month for additional large chunks for them to feast on. Two pileated woodpeckers are helping to remove a lot of suet too.

Finally on the 25th, the days started getting longer but the longer days do not reflect warmer temperatures.